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Memoirs and correspondence (official and familiar) of Sir ...

Robert Murray Keith, Gillespie Smyth

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Queen Caroline Matilda
of Denmark
Sister to George the Third

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London, Henry Colburn, 1818

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

(OFFICIAL AND FAMILIAR)

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH, K.B.,

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY AT THE COURTS OF DRESDEN, COPENHAGEN, AND VIENNA, FROM 1769 TO 1792.

WITH A MEMOIR OF

QUEEN CAROLINA MATILDA OF DENMARK,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVOLUTION THERE IN 1772.

EDITED BY

MRS. GILLESPIE SMYTH.

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Letters—the living thoughts of a race departed; the record of their playful humours and buoyant fancies, their fresh, cordial, overflowing love! . . . . We go through the world, blaming its coldness, and cursing its cruelties, and its crimes; but all unconscious of the vast riches of joy, and intellect, and affection, which hem us in on all sides, and overflow continually into the Eternal Sea. Thanks be to an all-gracious God, who has caused them to flow!—HOWITT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF HARDWICKE,

ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVORS OF

THE WORTHIES COMMEMORATED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES:

REGARDED THROUGH LIFE WITH PARENTAL PREDILECTION BY THEIR SUBJECT,

AND WITH FILIAL VENERATION BY THEIR EDITOR;

THEY ARE, WITH ENHANCED GRATITUDE FOR THE KIND PERMISSION,

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PREFACE.

THE motives which have given birth to the following publication, are such, as it is believed may enlist the sympathies, if not challenge the approbation, of the reader. There are, in the annals of every family, any of whose members have filled conspicuous stations in the public service—some privileged epochs round which its own memories have been fondly taught to congregate, and which it would fain rescue from oblivion in those of others. Such, during the long diplomatic career of Sir Robert Murray Keith, was the episode of the revolution in Denmark in 1772; and his spirited rescue, as representative of Great Britain, of a "daughter of England," and the sister of his sovereign, from a fate the least disastrous probable issue of which was imprisonment for life in a northern fortress.

The omission—probably from prudential motives—of this most critical and important interposition, in a foreign work of fiction, recently translated, and introduced to the

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British public under the attractive title of the "Queen of Denmark,"* (an omission which the present editor may be pardoned for ranking with that of the "part of Hamlet," from another Danish tragedy) naturally led to a search into those family archives where reposed the familiar letters and official correspondence penned during the events themselves, and so honourable alike to the character, the feelings, and the fame of him by whom they were written and received.†

To weave these valuable and hitherto inedited documents into a slight record of the charms, the sorrows, and the injuries of the British Princess, to whom (in his own striking words) it was a "proud commencement for the Envoy's chivalry to convey, through the vaulted entrance of Hamlet's castle,‡ the welcome tidings of fraternal affection and liberty restored,"—was felt to be alike a duty and a pleasure. To this, the following

* The Danish title of the work is "Old Recollections;" that of the German translation "Christian the Seventh and his Court." As a novel, it possesses considerable interest.

† On a search being instituted (by the kind permission of the Earl of Hardwicke) in those rich repositories of historical and political materials, to which his great ancestor, and that able negotiator, Sir Joseph Yorke, (afterwards Lord Dover,) so largely contributed, and to which the dispatches of Sir R. M. Keith were, by his surviving relatives, appropriately added—though the strictly official details of the Danish affair were found to have been (naturally enough, from the peculiar delicacy of their subject) withdrawn; yet enough remained to lend ample testimony to the wrongs of the princess, and the energy of her diplomatic defender.

‡ That of Cronenbourg, near Elsinore, a noble gothic fortress, the supposed site of Shakspeare's drama, and where a "deeper tragedy" (to quote a distinguished Danish writer) "must awaken the sympathies of Englishmen, since Carolina Matilda was confined there, the victim of a foul and murderous court intrigue."

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sheets would have been exclusively limited, had not the reputation of Sir R. M. Keith for political sagacity, on the one hand, and wit and *bonhommie* on the other, suggested, on high literary authorities, the propriety of a more extensive selection from his twenty years' correspondence, while a resident at other foreign courts, than had been originally designed.

This enlarged plan, resulting in a copious *mélange* of the grave and the gay, unique perhaps in diplomatic life, and probably, on that account, more likely to find acceptance with the general reader—has seemed to justify, if not to render necessary, a more detailed account of the writer's family than would have served to introduce the letters from Denmark; as well as a review of the circumstances by which his character was fashioned, and its rare combination of soldier frankness, and courtier-like refinement, of political acumen, and domestic playfulness, developed and matured.

Should the indulgent reader, in tracing, as drawn by his own hand, the lineaments of one whom the same process has enabled a relative, early deprived of his society by death, for the first time to comprehend and appreciate—in any measure share her impressions—the dutiful labour of love of the Editor will have reaped its rich reward.

To the merely political reader, some apology may appear necessary, for the paucity of what the sated Envoy so often turns from with disgust, as the "*tools of his trade,*" viz., diplomatic details, during the long years intervening between 1772 and 1789. But besides

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the obsoleteness at this day, and comparative unimportance in European policy, of the events occurring at Vienna, during that long lull, preceding an unexampled tempest—they have been amply detailed, with copious references almost at every page to the valuable dispatches of Sir R. M. Keith, by Archdeacon Coxe; so that to take up the political thread where he left it, previously to the singular and hitherto inedited negotiations at the Congress of Sistovo in 1791, has been not only the Editor's most eligible, but sole possible course.

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PORTRAIT OF CAROLINA MATILDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK . . . . . Frontispiece.

VOLUME II.

PORTRAIT OF SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH . Frontispiece.

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

"The Keiths, of Craig, in Kincardineshire," says that accurate antiquary and genealogist, Sir Walter Scott (whose well known friendship for one gifted member of the family, led him, in one of the later editions of his novels, to give this sketch of its history), "descended from John Keith, fourth son of William, second Earl Marischal; who got from his father, about the year 1480, the lands of Craig, and part of Garvock, in that county.

"Colonel Robert Keith, of Craig, the seventh in descent from John,* had, by his wife, Agnes, daughter of Robert Murray, of Murrayshall, one son, Robert Keith, ambassador to the courts of Vienna and Petersburgh; who died in Edinburgh in 1774. He married Margaret, second daughter of Sir William Cunningham, of Caprington, by Janet, only child and heiress of Sir

* And twenty-third, in the direct male line from their common ancestor.

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James Dick of Prestonfield ;* and among other children of the marriage, were the late well known diplomatist, Sir Robert Murray Keith, K.B., a general in the army, and twenty years the representative of Great Britain at the Court of Vienna; Sir Basil Keith, who died in 1777, governor of the Island of Jamaica, and my late excellent friend, Mrs. Anne Murray Keith, whose interesting character, in its leading points, I may now confess, the lady termed Mrs. Bethune Baliol,† was designed to shadow out; and whose death, occurring in 1818, had saddened a wide circle much attached to her, as well for her genuine virtue, and amiable qualities of disposition, as for the extent of information which she possessed, and the delightful manner in which she used to communicate it."

If ever these endowments, and the kindred qualities of unbending integrity and uprightness, in public and private life were hereditary—their possession by Sir Robert Keith, and the sister thus worthily commemorated,‡ may be traced to the precept and example of a father, who seems to have merited and enjoyed, in no ordinary degree, the affectionate esteem of the generation among whom he lived.

Himself the son of a soldier, and of no unworthy one,§ he appears never to have filled a directly military situation; though he passed several years of his life in

* Both baronetcies are now worthily represented by Sir Robert Keith Dick Cunynghame, of Prestonfield, near Edinburgh.

† In the novel of the "Chronicles of the Canongate."

‡ At a future and more appropriate period, along with an interesting acknowledgment of his literary obligations to one whom he affectionately styles "a late dear friend of mine," will be given the beautiful letter, written immediately after her decease, in which her character is more fully delineated by one so qualified for the task.

§ His distinguished cousin and contemporary, Earl Marischal, the friend of the great Frederick, and brother to the celebrated Marshal Keith,

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familiar domestication with one of the ablest captains of the age, as Secretary to the Forces, with the combined armies, under the great Earl of Stair. Of the satisfactory manner in which Mr. Keith discharged the duties of that responsible office, numerous confidential documents, showing the high esteem in which he was held by his noble principal, exist to bear testimony; while one little record of a transaction, unknown, probably save to his own nearest and dearest, survives to prove the nice sense of honour which could influence a gentleman of very small, though ancient estate, with a large and increasing family,* to decline, as inconsistent with his public character, a source of certain and almost unlimited emolument, which some might have deemed not incompatible with a semi-official situation, whose novelty (for it was then, it seems, for the first time filled), must have left its liabilities less accurately defined.

The offer, couched in flattering terms, and, with little doubt, apparently, of ready acceptance, of sharing with him (without pecuniary advances, or even the use of his name) the contract for supplying the allied armies, then about to enter Germany, is still extant in the writing of the liberal proposer, his friend Sir Abraham Hume. A slip of paper affixed to it, simply notes (for the sole information of his own family) that it was

thus characterizes him in a billet addressed to Sir Robert Murray Keith :—

"*Potzdam, 26th December*, 1768.

"I am obliged to you for letting me know of your nomination to the Court of Dresden ; for it gives me great pleasure, from the particular concern I take in what regards you, my friendship for your father, and the memory of your *grandfather, who had few equals*. You are a good race—I wish you would continue it."

* Eleven children, eight sons and three daughters, were born to him, but few of whom died in early infancy.

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declined by Mr. Keith, as unsuitable to the position he occupied in the public service.

Of the chivalrous and patriotic sentiments he was likely to have imbibed, during his residence with the great commander, whom disgust at not being permitted to follow up (to the probable destruction of the French army) the successes obtained by the victory of Dettingen induced soon after to resign, a proof has been found among his papers, in a copy of the letter addressed by Lord Stair, (then deep in rural avocations on his estate at Newliston), on the breaking out of the rebellion in Scotland in 1745, to the Duke of Cumberland. It may show how completely in the mind of a patriot and a Briton, personal pique and private considerations* gave way before the emergencies of the public service.

THE EARL OF STAIR TO THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND.

SIR,

I give your Royal Highness the trouble of this letter, to beg that you will be pleased to intercede with his Majesty, that I may have leave to follow your Royal Highness into the North against the rebels. I shall think myself very happy, if any skill I may have acquired in military matters, may be of use to your

* Shortly before he had thus petitioned for leave to prolong his retirement:—

"MY DEAR KEITH,

"I send you the enclosed for the Duke of Newcastle, and pray take notice to him that I shall look upon it as an indulgence to stay in the country as long as may be, that I may give directions about many things that amuse me, though they may not appear very material to his Grace."

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Royal Highness in the service of my country. I shall not use any arguments to prove my disinterested attachment to its welfare; and at the same time my sincere desire that it may prosper in the hands of your Royal Highness. I shall only beg leave to assure you, that on great matters, I shall give my opinion fairly and honestly, without being wedded to my own way of thinking, and without being in any degree incompatible with others.

I have the honour to be, &c.

STAIR.

To H. R. H. the Duke of Cumberland.

The Duke's reply was as follows:*—

MY LORD,

I shall certainly acquaint the King with your obliging request, and wish it may be granted, knowing the weight it would be of, to have a General with me, whose experience and skill are so universally approved. But I fear that the King will hardly be persuaded to leave the army that remains about London without a chief, while we seem to be threatened with an invasion from France. Whether the king grants your very obliging request or not, I shall, and do, take it for a real mark of your sincere friendship for me.

I remain your affectionate friend,

WILLIAM.

St. James's, Nov. 22nd, 1745.

While the tenor of this reply leads us to anticipate that the youthful commander and the King his father, would be unwilling to divide with an older and more

* Found among Mr. Keith's papers in his own hand-writing.

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renowned warrior, the triumphs of Culloden, posterity may rejoice that his well-won laurels were unstained by its blood!

The talents for business manifested by Mr. Keith in the situation he held with the armies, must have led, on their dispersion, to his appointment* as Under-Secretary, by Lord Sandwich, then at the head of foreign affairs; a first step in diplomacy quickly followed by farther advancement. In the negotiations preceding the important treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, Mr. Keith seems to have taken a very prominent and influential part; as appears from the confidential tone of the then ministers in their communications with him, and their frequent expressions of surprise at points gained by him, when almost given up as hopeless.

On March 27th Lord Sandwich thus writes:—"Your intimation that it is possible to engage the republic to take the troops, even on the conditions contained in my orders, gives me great spirits. I heartily wish you may be able to carry it through, both for the sake of the public, and for the credit that will accrue to you from your success in this affair, which I own, when I left the Hague, I thought *desperate*."

On the 31st his Lordship thus again expresses himself:—"I heartily wish you may be able to make your words good, and get the business through, as it will deservedly do you credit in England. I own I despaired of it; but if it can be done, it will have a very good effect on the other side the water."

The most conclusive proof, however, of the estimate

* On this nomination the anti-Scottish spirit, so prevalent in Horace Walpole's days, thus finds vent:—"Lord Sandwich has made Mr. Keith his secretary. I don't believe your ancestor would have chosen his from *California*."

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formed (on the signature of the preliminaries, a few days after the above), of the diplomatic talents of Mr. Keith, was his immediate appointment to the embassy at Vienna.

In the month of October in the same year, when the treaty was definitively concluded, the Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister, thus writes to him. And as a specimen of the *confidential* diplomacy (the letter is autograph, and marked "*very private*") of a statesman, whose abilities, great personal awkwardness, and many glaring littlenesses in character and conduct, perhaps led his contemporaries to undervalue, we shall give it (as well as one or two subsequent ones, preserved apparently as curious by Mr. Keith himself) entire.

Hanover, Oct. 18th, 1748.

DEAR SIR,

I have too much satisfaction in the happy conclusion of the definitive treaty, with the approbation and concurrence of the Court of Vienna, not to take this opportunity of most *sincerely congratulating* you upon it. I own my utmost ambition and constant view has been to end this war, with preserving the strictest union with the house of Austria. For this reason, as well as others, I opposed the separate negotiation proposed upon the communication of Monsieur D'Argenson's project, by the Dutch ministers, in the year 1746. For this reason also, with others, I opposed the proceeding in the manner then wished by some, upon the overtures made last year by Marshal Saxe to his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, who did me the honour entirely to agree with me. And lastly, which is fresh in every person's memory, I insisted upon the

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immediate communication of Monsieur St. Sévérin's project, and Lord Sandwich's *contre projet*, to Count Kaunitz, *before the king himself had seen either of those pieces;* and when Monsieur de St. Sévérin went to Compiègne, to make the report of them. And I flatter myself my having been able, in some measure, to have prevented these several steps, and having ever since preserved the most constant and unreserved concert in everything, has made way for that great work which is now so happily brought to perfection.

Notwithstanding this, I have the misfortune to be suspected at Vienna of partiality to the King of Sardinia, and a design to set the Czarina against the Empress-queen. The folly and falsity of both which imputations, their Imperial majesties are too just and too clear-sighted to give into. When you have the honour to attend the Emperor, you will lay me at his Imperial Majesty's feet, with my most humble acknowledgments of his great grace and goodness to me. I am very sensible how much the peace of Europe, and the particular good correspondence between his Majesty and the Empress-queen, is owing to his Imperial Majesty's good offices and interposition upon this late occasion. For *God's sake*, let us have no obstacle to the exchange of the ratifications. You see how I put that affair.

I have another favour to ask of the Emperor; which is, that his Imperial Majesty would not suffer Monsieur Wasner to quit his commission in England. His fidelity to the Empress-queen, his great ability and knowledge in business, and, above all, his particular knowledge of England and his distinguished zeal for the maintenance of the union, make his return to England, at this critical time especially, absolutely

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necessary. I have no objection to your reading this letter to his Imperial Majesty, if you think proper. In it he will find the sentiments of my heart.

I am, with great truth, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

P.S.—Any *embarras* in the exchange of the ratifications will knock down all.

There are few readers of contemporary political gossip, who will not trace in this letter the leading characteristics of the man and minister.

But to return to Mr. Keith. In 1750, Lord Holdernesse, then Secretary for Foreign Affairs, thus writes to him:—

"I am very glad to find, on many occasions, how well satisfied the king and his ministers are with your way of transacting business; and with the compliments of the season, heartily wish you all manner of prosperity. With great truth and esteem,

HOLDERNESSE."

In July, 1753, Sir Joseph Yorke, himself an able and approved member of the *corps diplomatique*, thus writes:—"The arrival of a messenger this moment from London, gives me an opportunity of renewing my wishes for your health, and success in the *great points* that are transacting *through your channel*."

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In 1754, he thus expresses himself more fully :—

Hague, January 16th.

"The two last Imperial couriers that went through this place, were so pressed for time, that they did not allow me enough to make my compliments to you in writing; and I have not thought it necessary to put you to the expense of postage, to tell you—what I hope you have long since been convinced of—that nobody is more your humble servant, or more sincerely wishes you well, than I do. It is for this reason, that I must now beg leave to break in upon you, with my most hearty congratulations, upon the new mark of our Royal Master's favour and approbation which you have just now received. This distinction* has been longer deferred than I thought it well could be; but as it comes after so many years' experience of your conduct at the Court where you reside, though it is not so profitable, yet it is, if possible, more honourable.

"You have gone through (forgive me the expression) the *fiery ordeal*, and you are stamped as *pure gold* after a very full trial. May you go on as successfully as you have hitherto done, for the public service; and be an instrument of perfecting those important negotiations, at which you have so faithfully laboured. You have not two better well-wishers than Count Bentinck and Prince Louis; and I should not do full justice to their sentiments, if I concealed from you how much they are pleased at what the King has done for you."

The opinion entertained by the former of these

* Probably his elevation to ambassadorial rank with the corresponding pay, as in a letter shortly before, from the Duke of Newcastle, he says, "You shall be taken care of to your *entire satisfaction*."

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distinguished men (who had recently taken a leading position in the affairs of his native country, Flanders) of the personal credit of Mr. Keith, as well as the extent of their mutual friendship, founded on mutual esteem, may be gathered from the following letter, written by Count Bentinck in 1756:—

DEAR SIR,

I will not make any reflections on the present state of affairs in Europe. I know you, and you know me. You will oblige me in the highest degree, and do me the most signal service, by employing your personal credit with the Vice-Chancellor, Count Colloredo, to procure me the speedy expedition of the Imperial confirmation, which the grand majority of the Aulic Council voted for. I cannot doubt of the Emperor's joining the majority.

As to affairs in England, they give me great uneasiness. Not as to her situation in regard to France, for I think England a match for France; and the odds, in my opinion, are in her favour. But resolutions there, as here, are often the result of a conciliatory deliberation between differing opinions. I wish the Duke of Newcastle had resolved to feel his strength, and had had the constancy to stand on his own legs, which he easily might have done. But he has people who make him go out of his way, and I heartily wish you may not suffer by it. But as the post you are in is certainly *one of the most brilliant*, it may easily excite envy, and desire of being in your place. If I have any indication of what is now mere suspicion, my friendship for you will make me forewarn you immediately.

Yours, Dear Sir, for ever and ever,

BENTINCK.

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However unquestionably "brilliant" might be (as alleged by the writer of the above) the "post" thus envied by brother diplomatists, its realities corresponded rather more nearly with the "fiery ordeal" spoken of by one himself no stranger to the thankless toils of negotiation. It was at a moment of peculiar irritation and dissatisfaction with England, on the part of the politically inflexible, though personally amiable, Empress-queen, that Mr. Keith entered on his extremely delicate mission. The Duke of Newcastle thus wrote on the occasion:—

[*Private.*]

DEAR SIR,

You will receive by this messenger, his Majesty's orders for your conduct upon a very delicate and important occasion; and I am persuaded that you will execute them with all the punctuality, decorum, and respect, which are due to the great powers you are about to approach, and are so agreeable to his Majesty's royal will and intentions. It would be the highest presumption and vanity in me, to imagine that anything I could add could contribute in any measure to the success of your representations. But I flatter myself that my zeal, attachment, and devotion, to the House of Austria, cannot be called in question; and I must be allowed to make some judgment of what may, or may not, be the consequences, if you should not obtain those orders to be immediately sent to Count Kaunitz, which you are now desired to solicit.

In this light, and this light only, I beg you would lay me at the Emperor's feet; and humbly implore his Imperial Majesty to consider, that the fate of Europe is now in the Empress-queen's hands; that upon the orders to be sent to Count Kaunitz, will depend the

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putting it in the power, or not, of those who wish ill to the present system, to disconcert, if not entirely to overturn it. It may be too much for me to say—but I say it from a heart entirely devoted to the interest of the King, my master, and to the support of that cause in which his Majesty has so much signalised himself.

Dear Sir, with great truth, yours,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

"The ill-humour of the Court of Vienna," says Coxe, in his History of the House of Austria (the Fifth Volume of which is chiefly based on the official despatches of Mr. Keith, and his son and successor Sir R. M. Keith), "had been apparent during the whole progress of the negotiation. The Empress-queen even endeavoured to obtain possession of the Low Countries, without acceding to the definitive treaty; but her hopes were frustrated by the firmness of the British Cabinet; which found it necessary to extort her accession, by threatening to sign without her. The disagreeable task of communicating this intelligence to the Empress, was assigned to Mr. Keith. She received the new minister with her usual benignity; and testified a grateful sense of the assistance which she had derived from England. But when Mr. Keith requested her concurrence to the peace, and was proceeding to announce the resolution of his Court, the high-spirited princess interrupted him, and exclaimed, with great emotion, "I already know too much of that business, and will leave that part of your commission to be settled between you and my ministers!"

"Her chagrin," pursues the same authority, "broke out on many occasions; and on none more than when Mr. Keith requested an audience, to offer his congratulations on the return of a peace, with which (though it

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terminated a bloody and extensive war, at whose commencement her very existence had been, and perhaps, but for the support of Great Britain, successfully menaced, and whose close left her in possession of nearly the whole of her inheritance,) she was so far from being satisfied, that her minister was ordered to observe, that compliments of *condolence* were more proper than those of congratulation, and insinuated that the British minister would oblige his mistress by sparing her a conversation which would be highly disagreeable to her, and no less unpleasing to him." *

There cannot, perhaps, be a more conclusive proof of the mild conciliatory character for which Mr. Keith was so eminently distinguished, as well as of its prompt efficacy in disarming hostility of so decided a character, than is incidentally furnished by the following letter from the Duke of Newcastle, written within a few months of the angry reception above described :—

Newcastle House, April 18th, 1749.

DEAR SIR,

I have this day received the favour of your's, of the 16th instant, with a private one of the same date, to me. I have not seen the King since your letter was decyphered; but I am persuaded that the Empress-queen's conversation with you, in the drawing-room, will have given his Majesty the greatest satisfaction, the King wishing nothing more than to pursue the most perfect union, friendship, and concert, with her Imperial Majesty, in everything that relates to their mutual interest. I could not let this post go without letting you know the sense that I have of the Empress-queen's

* Coxe's History of the House of Austria.

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gracious expressions on my subject. I beg you would take all opportunities of laying me at her feet, and of assuring their Imperial Majesties that they have not at their own Court a minister who wishes better to them than I do; or, as far as depends upon me, endeavours more to promote their real service. And this from a principle, that I am thus doing the best service to the King, my master, and to my own country, which must always be my first consideration. I have the vanity to think that my well-meant endeavours have not altogether been disappointed; which a thorough impartial examination into the transactions of the last three years will make appear. My present great comfort is, that there seems to be such an union of sentiments between the King and their Imperial Majesties, and any little *aigreurs* that misunderstandings or misrepresentations may have occasioned, are *now so far forgot*, that I flatter myself, for the future, we shall have no other contest but that of striving to be forwardest to do agreeable things to each other. Though your letters by Dick were in the main extremely satisfactory, yet you will not wonder that a *heart like mine* did not *till now* find in them all that I expected.

Your's, &c.,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

MR. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.*

Vienna, April 16th, 1749.

MY LORD,

On Saturday last, late in the evening, I received the honour of your Grace's despatch of the

* This letter (not among those quoted by Coxe) is so graphic a

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21st of March, and next morning, according to your directions, communicated the substance of it to Count Uhlfeld. I took this occasion to observe to him that the affair of the 100,000*l.*, with all the circumstances which attended it, was an undoubted proof of the King's firm resolution to end the war, and all demands relative to it, in the manner the most agreeable to the Empress-queen, and the most likely to cement and establish the most perfect concord with their Imperial Majesties. Monsieur Uhlfeld—as he well might—was extremely pleased with this communication, and seemed thoroughly sensible of the generous and friendly part which his Majesty had acted. He said he was just going to Court, and would take that opportunity of apprising their Imperial Majesties of the information I had given him, which he did not doubt would be highly acceptable to them.

It is with great satisfaction that I can now acquaint your Grace that the information I transmitted by Dick, the messenger, of the good disposition of this Court was well founded; for last night, at the drawing-room at Schönbrun, the Empress-queen accosted me in the most gracious manner. Her Majesty said, though the place was public and the company very numerous, she could not let slip that occasion of telling me that she was perfectly well satisfied with the substance of the despatches I had lately received; that she was very sensible of these last marks of his Majesty's friendship, and was much obliged to him for them: that the money, though it came very seasonably, was not the circum-

picture of the happier moments of the intercourse which for nine years subsisted between the writer and the illustrious personages engaged, that it has been deemed eligible to give it entire, as also throwing light on the British Premier's delighted reply.

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stance that pleased her most, but that her greatest satisfaction was to find that the King agreed with her in his thoughts on public affairs, and above all, that he did her the justice to believe, that she had never been capable of any intention to disturb the tranquillity of Europe. She said she had always had, and ever should have, the greatest disposition to live in the most perfect harmony and concert with his Majesty, and she added, smiling, that she hoped things were now in such a situation between us, that she should not need to fear any more *being scolded.*

I answered, that what her Majesty had now said made me very happy, as it put it in my power to send the King, my master, the news in the world that would be most pleasing to him; and that I could venture to assure her Majesty, that she would meet with all the returns of friendship and confidence she could expect, or wish for, at the King's hands; who would never fail to give her the most essential proofs of his regard for her royal person, and of his attention to her interests: and I said, smiling (as her Majesty had done), that on our side, we had never had any inclination *to scold;* and that for the future, there would be no more occasion for any thing of that kind, as her Majesty's discourse showed that the opinions of the two Courts were now as much united as their interests; and that nothing could contribute more to keep up this good understanding, than to forget any little disputes which might have happened. That, for my part, I had always considered them only as *Lovers' Quarrels,* which commonly ended in a thorough reconciliation; and that upon this occasion, the event had justified my opinion.

The Empress then said, in the same strain, that she was willing to look upon them in that light; that she had ever wished, above all things, to live well with his

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Majesty, whom she considered as her oldest and best friend; and that she expected the King would have equal consideration for her, as she was sure that she deserved his confidence, as much, at least, as any of his new friends. I replied, that the King had not only never preferred any other friend to her Majesty, but that I could take it upon me to say, that he had never put any one, old or new, in competition with her; that, though I could not help remarking that the insinuation her Majesty had dropped about "*new friends*," was a little unjust, yet I owned it gave me pleasure, as I thought jealousy a *mark of love*. The Empress answered that she could not deny that she was a little jealous;* and that it proceeded from the inclination she had always had to love us. "*Mais*" (dit-elle), "*je suis Dame, et comme telle, je veux qu'on me fasse les avances.*" I said that her Majesty had all the right in the world to demand it, that we were extremely sensible that she deserved it, and that she might depend upon our doing it.

This, as near as I can recollect, was the substance of the Empress's conversation with me; but in the course of it, she took occasion to say many very handsome things with regard to his Majesty's person; and she expressed a thorough satisfaction at the King's behaviour towards her, and the disposition of his servants to second his Majesty's views.

* In another letter, Mr. Keith says:—"I have, in former communications, insinuated to your Grace, that with very quick parts, and a thorough good understanding, this Princess has a considerable tincture of jealousy in her constitution; and it never appears more strongly than with regard to her friendship with his Majesty, in which she cannot bear to have *any rival*. This she owns herself to be the case; and Count Uhlfeld has urged me for *God's sake* to do what I could to prevent any hint being given by my Court to justify such a suspicion, which would have the most *fatal effects*."

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MR. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

Vienna, May 7th, 1749.

My Lord,

I yesterday delivered the King's letters of notification at the *appartement*, to their Imperial Majesties, who both received with satisfaction the news of the increase of his Majesty's family, and desired me to make their compliments of congratulation to the King upon this occasion, and to return their thanks for this mark of his attention. The delivery of these letters gave me the opportunity of a pretty long conversation with both the Emperor and Empress, but separately. In that with her Majesty I informed her that your Grace had received my despatches, and had laid them before the King; and that the contents of them had given his Majesty great satisfaction in every respect. The Empress expressed great pleasure; she said she was very happy to find that the King approved their ideas, and was convinced of the sincerity of their intentions for maintaining the peace of the North, and the general tranquillity of Europe. She said repose was absolutely necessary for them in their present circumstances; and her Majesty added, that it should always be her study to cultivate and improve the new friendship and correspondence with the King, and that she thought things were now happily in such a situation, and the interests of the two Courts so very much united, that she could foresee nothing that could happen to lessen that harmony which was so necessary for their mutual safety.

After I had left the Empress, the Emperor did me the honour to desire I would go with him into the garden; and when we were there, his Majesty began a conversation in the most amicable manner in the

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world. He said I might assure the King my master, that however defective they might be now and then in forms, they were "*des honnêtes gens au fond,*" and that we should always find them so; that they were very sensible of his Majesty's friendship upon all occasions, and should never fail on their side in making suitable returns. The Emperor then talked of the present situation of the affairs of Europe, and said that it was both their interest and inclination to hinder any new flame to break out which might endanger the public tranquillity; that they would heartily concur with his Majesty in every measure that could contribute to so desirable an end; and that he hoped, considering the present disposition of France, there was no immediate danger of any new disturbances. He said, however, he could not help having some apprehensions from the preparations the King of Prussia had made, and the great expense he had put himself to; which, from the knowledge he had of that Prince's disposition, he could not imagine he would do without some view of *turning it to account*. On the other hand, his Majesty said he was afraid the Czarina's personal resentment against the Prince Successor of Sweden, might engage her in some violent measures; and hoped the King would join his good offices with theirs in endeavouring to keep that Princess within bounds.

In spite of a revulsion of feeling on the part of Maria Theresa, so creditable to the conciliatory powers of Mr. Keith, and of those courtier-like epistles of the Duke of Newcastle, in which (no doubt to the reader's amusement) the "*heart*" of the wily *Premier* is made to play so conspicuous a part, fresh subjects of "*aigreur*" and "*misunderstanding*" continually arose. Yet it is an additional proof of the homage ultimately rendered

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by one lofty and upright mind to similar qualities in another, that Maria Theresa, notwithstanding Mr. Keith's residence at her Court was frequently embittered, by the necessity of communicating, in terms "softened by the natural courtesy and urbanity of the ambassador," arrogant and peremptory despatches from the British Court,—entertained a peculiar and distinguished regard for the person of the English minister; which she testified on all occasions, during his nine years' sojourn; and of which, on his departure (though it took place under the painful circumstances of a political rupture with his Court), substantial tokens have descended to posterity, in the form of a portrait, for which she personally and specially sat, and of splendid dresses, embroidered under her own directions by the nuns of the convent she patronised, as presents from her to the ambassador's three daughters.

Nor, though Mr. Keith often declined delivering the harsh and haughty messages which he was ordered to communicate to the Empress *in person*,* and thus, says Coxe, "more than once incurred the censure of the British ministry for his delicacy and good sense," did he seek to conciliate the favour of that Princess by any undue concessions, or any compromise of the honour of his own sovereign, or even of his own honest sentiments. On the contrary, when the celebrated Prince Kaunitz had worked on the Empress-queen, by means of her inveterate dislike to Prussia, to enter into a negotiation with France, and abandon, in defiance of the opinion of her husband and the other members of her family, her hitherto close relations with the maritime powers; and when, amidst the utmost affability

* On one occasion when her very *interesting* situation rendered any agitation highly dangerous.

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and personal condescension, she announced the fact to Mr. Keith, "affecting to disbelieve that the Empress could connect herself with the inveterate enemy of her person and family, the British minister declared that nothing would convince him of such an alliance, till he saw with his own eyes the signature of '*Maria Theresa*' at the bottom of a treaty with that Crown." "I am," she replied, "far from being French in my dispositions, and do not deny that the Court of Versailles has been my bitter enemy; but I cannot conceal that the cessions which Great Britain extorted from me, at the peace of Dresden and of Aix la Chapelle, have totally disabled me." The British minister exclaimed, "Will you, the Empress and Archduchess, so far humble yourself, as to throw yourself into the arms of France?" "Not into the arms," she hastily rejoined, "but on the side of France." The Empress listened with great affability to the remonstrances and arguments of the British minister, but remained unshaken in her resolution.* Yet even this wide discrepancy in opinion, and bold assertion of his country's ancient claims on the gratitude and alliance of Austria, failed to impair the friendly sentiments entertained by her of the honest envoy, afterwards expressed to, and continued towards, his son.

In July, 1757, the avowed coalition between Austria and France, and active hostilities entered upon by the latter power, led to the recall from London of the Austrian minister; and, as a necessary consequence, the departure from Vienna of the British resident there. The notes which passed on the occasion, betwixt the personal friends, though political opponents, Mr. Keith and Count Kaunitz, have been preserved, and do credit to the feelings of both.

* Coxe's History of the House of Austria, vol. v.

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MR. KEITH TO THE COUNT KAUNITZ.

Vienna, July 22nd, 1757.

SIR,

I have just received my letters of recall, the natural consequence of those of the Count Colloredo; and am preparing to quit Vienna as soon as possible. This being the case, I hope your Excellency will have the goodness to expedite the necessary passports for myself, my servants, and baggage, &c.

With regard to the present situation of public affairs, I shall content myself with saying that it is one which I had no share in producing, and which I sincerely regret. But there is one circumstance connected with it which gives me great pain; viz., that I find myself thereby deprived of the honour of offering, in person, to her Majesty the Empress-queen, my very humble and respectful acknowledgments for all the tokens of her goodness with which it has pleased her Majesty to honour me during my residence at her court; a goodness of which I shall cherish an eternal remembrance, accompanied by the liveliest gratitude.

I also avail myself, Sir, of the present opportunity, to thank your Excellency for all your civilities, and to assure you that I have the honour to remain, with the most perfect respect, &c.

ROBERT KEITH.

THE COUNT DE KAUNITZ TO MR. KEITH.*

Vienna, July 26th, 1757.

SIR,

You will herewith receive the passports you have requested. I have the satisfaction to be able to assure you, at the same time, that her Majesty renders,

* Translated from the original in French.

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to the manner in which you have acquitted yourself of your duties during the entire duration of your ministry at this Court, all the justice which is due to it; and that she will ever recall the remembrance of it with pleasure. I have the orders to make this known to you, and I fulfil them with all the pleasure which I shall at all times experience in having the opportunity of proving to you the sincere consideration with which I have the honour to be,

LE COMTE DE KAUNITZ.

It is pleasing to think that these courtly expressions were not, either in the sovereign or her distinguished minister, mere words of idle compliment. Ten years after, when Sir Robert Murray Keith paid a visit to Vienna, on his way from Dresden to Copenhagen, the Empress-queen, and her whole family, testified the liveliest interest in all that regarded his "worthy father;" and Prince Kaunitz, albeit little wont to show courtesy to any one, called for a bumper to the health of his "worthy and amiable friend, Old Keith."

A token of reciprocal good-will towards a man afterwards so distinguished in the annals of European diplomacy, exists in one of the very few letters preserved, from Mr. Keith, written seven years previous to the above (when its subject was comparatively unknown), recommending Count Kaunitz to his countryman the Earl of Albemarle, then ambassador at Paris.

Vienna, March 14th, 1750.

MY LORD,

I have been honoured with your Excellency's letter of the 10th of February, inclosing one to his Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, which shall be

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forwarded to him by the first occasion; in the meantime I cannot help reproaching your Lordship for your unkindness, in making excuses for giving me the trouble (as you call it) of that letter. You know that you have every title to any small service I can possibly do you; and I am sure you do me the justice to believe that nothing would give me more pleasure than any opportunity of being really of use to you, or any of your friends.

Count Kaunitz, who proposes to set out for Paris about the beginning of May, has frequently desired me to make his compliments to your Excellency. You will find him a very *reasonable,* and a very *practicable man;* and I know he proposes a particular satisfaction to himself, in living with you in the most amicable manner, and in the most perfect confidence.

Your Exellency's, &c.,

ROBERT KEITH.

It was from the period of this embassy, that the French predilections of this celebrated individual may be chiefly dated, as well as that avowed ascendancy in the Imperial councils, to which, during the residence both of Mr. Keith and his son, so much of difficulty in maintaining the interests of England may be ascribed.

Before his departure he had affected great enthusiasm for the ancient connections of the House of Austria, and had become the channel of a secret correspondence between the Empress and the British minister, of which Mr. Keith thus writes:—"The Empress approved this mode, and said, 'I consent without hesitation to the proposal of Count Kaunitz. I am happy in giving you a convincing proof of my confidence, and I hope you will consider it in that light, as you are the *only person* who has, or shall have, a correspondence of that nature.'"

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Of the importance attached to the negotiations in which Mr. Keith had so long and faithfully laboured, by his superiors, and brother diplomatists, we have had various notices. Of the light in which they were regarded by himself, while yet in progress, as well as of his opinions on widely differing topics, and a picture of his situation, while a resident at the Imperial Court, a relic survives, in an autograph letter from the veteran negotiator, to that distinguished retired soldier, (his connection by marriage) the Earl of Balcarres.*

Vienna, December 2nd, 1753.

My Lord,

I am so much ashamed of my behaviour towards your Lordship, as a correspondent, that I should hardly have ventured to write to you at all, if I had not the happiness of having so powerful a mediator as my Lady Dalrymple † to intercede for me; but I trust so much to her interest with your Lordship, and to her goodness for me, that, in place of writing bad excuses for my silence, I will trust entirely to her good offices for my pardon.

Your Lordship's occupations and mine are so very different, that they appear at first sight to have no connection together. But when your Lordship considers that, upon that very balance of power which you talk of as chimerical, the liberty of Europe, and, consequently, the security of our island, depends, you will find that the enjoyment of the fruit of your labours, as well as of every other branch of your property, can be no otherwise effectually secured; and in that light I

* A nobleman of whom so many interesting notices are given by his descendant in the "Lives of the Lindsays."

† Sister-in-law to Mr. Keith, and mother-in-law to the Earl.

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should think myself very happy if by my poor endeavours I could contribute in any degree to establish it upon a solid and lasting basis. And the other point you mention, viz., the election of the King of the Romans, is a measure so necessary for that purpose, that no pains or expense ought to be spared for carrying it into execution; and though that affair has hung over so long, I am not without hopes, one day or other, to see it brought to a happy conclusion.

Your Lordship's alliance into a family with which my own is so closely connected,* and which is so dear to me, has, I think, made me love you, if possible, a little more than I did before; but neither that nor anything else could add to the good opinion, the esteem, and the sincere regard, which I always had for you; and it is one of the things for which I regret my absence from home, that I cannot improve the opportunity of cultivating your connection and friendship, which the circumstances of our alliance would afford me. But I flatter myself that if my Royal Master continues to approve of my zealous endeavours in his service, I may hope to find myself in a condition to pass the latter part of my life with ease, and perhaps to do something for my children. In the meantime, I live as agreeably here as I could wish. I have the honour to receive many obliging marks of distinction from their Imperial Majesties. I am admitted into the best companies, and I have health and gaiety enough left to take my share in the pleasures which this Court affords.

The happiness you enjoy in the company of so agreeable a woman as Lady Balcarres, and the easy circumstances of your fortune, are, and will always be,

* The Earl had united himself to Miss Dalrymple, daughter to Sir Robert Dalrymple, whose wife was sister-in-law to Mr. Keith.

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the sources of real satisfaction; and the reasonable use you make of the accession of riches, which fortune has thrown in your way, to improve your estate, both in quality and beauty, is not only a solid advantage to your family, but a general benefit to the nation. The account you give of the thriving condition of our country gives me great satisfaction; and I hope the effects of national wealth and improvement will be national contentment and happiness.

I give you joy with all my heart on the rapid increase of your family; and I hope you will still live many years, to beget children and plant trees—the first for the service, the last for the ornament, of Scotland.* When, or if ever, I shall have the happiness of seeing that country, or your Lordship, I cannot say; but I think I may venture to affirm that no man wishes the prosperity of my country more sincerely than myself, and that no man can be, with more sincerity and regard, than I am, my Lord Balcarres's

Most humble and most obedient servant,

ROBERT KEITH.

However undesirable might be, in comparison with the state of things described in this letter, the distant and then semi-barbarous Court of Petersburgh, the immediate transfer thither of the services of Mr. Keith, when no longer available at Vienna, affords a proof that they were at least sufficiently appreciated by the Government at home to be put into instant requisition. His

* The wish was doubly realised. Eight sons of Lord Balcarres survived to fill, with credit and honour, important military, civil, and religious appointments in their country's service; while the "trees" alluded to cast their venerable shade over succeeding generations, not less worthy of the noble ancestry from whence they sprung.

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public transactions in that remote sphere would be too far removed by time and distance, to be generally interesting, had they not become by circumstances involved with the fates of some of the greatest, as well as most unfortunate of his contemporaries.

He arrived at Petersburgh in March, 1758, and in his very first despatch notifies the arrest and disgrace of the Great Chancellor Bestucheff, and other officers of the Court. Matters were not for some days in train for him to obtain even his audience of the Empress. When he did so, the contrast between the stiff ceremonial of the northern Court, the previous "discourse" he was desired to "prepare," and the answer, *by proxy*, returned to it, according to usage, by the sovereign, must have formed a painful contrast to his many amicable conversations, and even occasional "political quarrels" (as she afterwards playfully styled them to his son) with the accomplished Maria Theresa. "I made my bows, and retired," he says, "without a word having passed on either side, which I am informed is the etiquette of this Court."

Of its politics on his arrival, Mr. Keith gives the following sketch, extracted as bearing on the future history of the celebrated Catherine the Second; and proving, as does the whole correspondence, that so far from being (as, from his subsequent high favour with her unhappy husband, was afterwards groundlessly insinuated) inimical to her, the British Ambassador, with the chivalry of his nation, was from the first disposed not only to compassionate but assist her.

"The disgrace of the Chancellor," he says, "had been long contriving by his enemies at Court; and the immediate pretence for it was, his having entered into some intrigues with the Grand Duchess. And the affair was pushed with the more vivacity, as is pretended,

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upon the French party's hearing of my coming near this place; and what confirmed this opinion was Bestucheff's being arrested on the very day that the account arrived here of my being come to Riga. But be that as it will, I found, on my arrival, the French party in possession of the whole credit at Court, and the two Ambassadors, Count Esterhazi and Marquis de l'Hôpital, giving law to both Court and town. They have likewise got the Grand Duke absolutely in their power, having, in order thereto, alienated his affections from the Grand Duchess, who used to have great influence over him; and it is supposed that one Brokdorff has been the instrument of this change, who ingratiated himself with his Imperial Highness, by encouraging him in all sorts of debauches, in which light the Grand Duchess had complained of him to the Empress some time before. But *unfortunately* her complaints were not listened to, her enemies having taken care, by false suggestions, to give the Empress bad impressions of her Imperial Highness, so that at present she is far from being well at Court."

That compassion for the future Empress did not blind Mr. Keith to her indiscretions, appears in the following hint:—"The poor Grand Duchess is still in distress, Count Poniatowski is involved in some way or other in the late intrigues, and it is thought he will not remain long at this Court; and indeed, in my opinion, he had better never have *come to it* in the *shape he did.*"

"As to the Great Duchess, she has been all along in great distress. Ill with the Empress, and still worse with the Grand Duke, she received the other day a very sensible mortification, one of her favourite bedchamber women having been taken from her and put under arrest. This, I hear, occasioned an interview between the Empress and the Duchess, about four days ago,

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in which, after some sharp reproofs on one side, and warm expostulations on the other, her Imperial Highness fell at the Empress's feet, and told her, that since she had been so unfortunate as to incur her displeasure, though innocently, and had thereby drawn upon herself so many and such sensible mortifications as, joined to family quarrels, made her life a burden to her, she had but one favour to ask, viz., that her Majesty would allow her to retire out of Russia, and to pass the rest of her life with her mother; assuring the Empress, at the same time, that if his Majesty should think it for the interest of the empire that the Great Duke should take another wife, neither she nor any of her family would make the smallest objection to it. The Empress, they say, was greatly affected with this discourse, and talked with much more softness than before to the Grand Duchess, entering into several particulars with a greater air of kindness than she had done for a long while past. And when, in the conversation, her Imperial Highness was beginning to touch upon some things regarding the Grand Duke's unkindness (who was present), the Empress made her a sign to hold her tongue, and in a low voice said that she must have a conversation with her alone, and that it should be very soon. It was thought Wednesday last was the day appointed for it, as her Majesty, whose heart is at bottom both good and tender,* was to take the sacrament that day. It is hoped a reconciliation may have been the consequence of that meeting, and certainly the generality of people wish it very sincerely, the Great Duchess having many friends among those of the first rank."

* Of this Empress (Elizabeth) Coxe says that she "displayed a motley mixture of the weakness, devotion, and voluptuousness, which had been the grand characteristics of her life. Her favourite," he adds, "was devoted to France, but some of her *leading ministers*, to England."

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"*May 30th*, 1758.

"On Sunday evening there was an *appartement* at Court, when the Empress appeared for the first time since I have been at Petersburgh; and her Majesty, after having talked to the Grand Duke and Duchess, was pleased to come up to me, and entertained me in a very gracious manner for half a quarter of an hour. Her Majesty appeared in perfect health, and there was no mark left of the fluxion on her eye, which had so long prevented her from appearing in public. The Empress stood a good while by the Grand Duchess's chair, who was at play, and had a good deal of chat with her in a very cheerful and cordial way.

"The measures of this Court will, I believe, be determined by the good or bad success of the King of Prussia's arms against the Empress-queen. I have reason to think they are weary of the war, and I know they have not a shilling to rub upon another. Count Woronzow, (who had been invisible to the foreign ministers,) appeared on Saturday, and he made me dine with him *en famille*, the first time I have been invited to that or any other Russian table."

Though the advances thus made by the great Chancellor of Russia were improved during the following year into great apparent political intimacy with Mr. Keith, who appears ably to have turned to account all the opportunities then afforded, to cultivate a good understanding between the Courts of Britain, Petersburgh, and Berlin, the slender prospect of utility arising from his hyperborean exile induced him thus to solicit his recall:—

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MR. KEITH TO THE EARL OF HOLDERNESSE.

St. Petersburgh, May 2-13, 1760.

My Lord,

The season of the year advancing very fast, and the summer being very short in this country, I must beg leave to put your Lordship in mind of what I formerly hinted to you, of my desire of returning home. Your Lordship knows that I accepted of this commission merely in obedience to his Majesty's commands, and at the desire of the Duke of Newcastle and your Lordship, but upon the condition that it should not last above two or three years at most. That term will now be very soon elapsed, and which is worse, without my having been of any use to his Majesty's service in this post, which, whatever defects I may otherwise have, has not been owing either to want of diligence or zeal.* Probably the situation of affairs at this Court on my arrival, and since, would have made it difficult for a much abler minister to succeed; but, however that may be, I see very little hopes of things mending here for some time, and consequently there is no danger to the King's service in any respect by my being recalled, especially as your Lordship has a whole summer before you to choose one to come in my place. But, beside the above, your Lordship may easily think that at my age

* This must have been rendered apparent to his superiors (by whom his recall was happily refused, till opportunities of rendering to his country, and its ally, the King of Prussia, very *eminent services*, were opened by a new reign) by the frequent though ineffectual arguments in favour of peace with the former, and remonstrances in behalf of the latter (whose *kingdom* it sounds strange to us to hear that Russia then *seriously* talked of "*taking and retaining for herself*") which all the previous despatches of the British minister contain.

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it is very natural to wish for a retreat, and to return to my family, which I have now been absent from near twenty years. The consideration of health is likewise of some weight, though I shall never hesitate to expose that, or my life itself, for the service of so gracious a master; and two attacks of fever which I had last winter, make me dread the approach of that season. All these reasons, joined to your ordinary indulgence for me, will induce your Lordship, I hope, to use your good offices with the King in my behalf, and to prevail upon his Majesty to condescend to grant my request. When your Lordship informed me some time ago that his Majesty had been pleased to intrust me with credit for a large sum of money,* you forgot to mention in whose hands the money was lodged; I must therefore beg the favour to know upon whom I may draw, if occasion should require: I mean only for such gratifications as I may judge it necessary to make, from time to time, to particular persons; for, as I said then, I see not the smallest appearance, at present, of laying out considerable sums to any advantage. I beg leave, before I end this letter, to recommend to your Lordship's protection my two sons. What they wish for themselves is, the rank of lieutenant-colonel for the eldest, and a port ship for the sailor; and I would fain hope that, by the assistance of your Lordship, they may obtain their wishes before the war ends; for if they should not, they would have no hold of anything, and have their fortune to begin again, as much as if they had never served.†

* £100,000 had been placed at Mr. Keith's disposal.

† The letter addressed to Mr. Keith by Mr. Pitt, about this period, shows that the request regarding these promotions was most readily granted (if not indeed anticipated by that great minister) and that on the ground of acknowledged desert on the part of the sons as well as

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I have one reason which makes me hope for success in my request to retire, viz., that it is the first favour that ever I asked for myself; for I can venture to say, and I appeal for the truth of it to all my Secretaries of State, that in the course of twenty years that I have served the Crown, I never desired increase of honours or appointments, I never asked for any employment, nor ever refused any, when it was thought I could be of use to the service of my Royal Master.

If your Lordship will be so good as use your credit with his Majesty for my obtaining this request, I shall consider it a most particular favour, and it will add to the respect with which I always am, &c.,

R. KEITH.

That the situation of a foreign minister, even when most highly accredited by superiors at home, and monarchs abroad, is no bed of roses, abundant proof will occur in the course of the following correspondence. The hints of discomfort thrown out by many a veteran diplomatist, find full and touching expression in a letter about to be given from an old and highly-esteemed public servant; which, however confidential in its original tenor, may now be freely brought forward, both as throwing light on an important and doubtful point of British policy, (the withholding of the subsidy from, and consequent alienation of the King of Prussia), and bearing on transactions during which, as the monarch's own letters will show, the great Frederick conceived himself to have incurred obligations to Mr. Keith,

the parent. The denial, or at least evasion, of Mr. Keith's request to be recalled, so frequently renewed, opened to his talents the influential sphere which Russia had hitherto failed to present to his tried experience in negotiations.

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which, throughout his remaining life, he omitted no opportunity to acknowledge.

The perusal of the previous correspondence of years from Petersburgh (much of which passed through the English minister's hands at Berlin) shows the gratitude, so freely expressed, to have been eminently due to Mr. Keith for his long and disinterested support, both as the ally of England, and from personal respect for his heroic qualities, of the then depressed and well nigh overwhelmed Prussian monarch. It was natural, therefore, for the writer of the following indignant epistle to conclude that its tenor, as severing the long ties of friendship between the crowns of England and Prussia, would be nearly as unwelcome to Mr. Keith as to himself. In 1762, Sir Andrew Mitchell, who had spent a lifetime as representative of Great Britain at the Court of Prussia, thus writes to the English minister at Petersburgh :—

Breslau, June 9th.

My dear Sir,

This goes by Walker, the messenger, who has brought me an answer to my despatch of the 4th of May, and I will not detain him to give you a *précis*, because I imagine they will have sent you a copy of that most *extraordinary piece*. If they have not, let me know, and you shall, by the first sure opportunity, have a fair account of it. The *news*,* your own letters will give you, and I fancy it will be as unpalatable to you as it is to me. We must, however, obey, and do our best; we are indeed the *servi servorum*, the beasts of burden that must go as they are driven. *Je suis las de mon s—— métier; mais des considérations réfléchies m'empêchent de prendre encore aucune résolution subite.*

* Of the refusal to continue the subsidy.

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Aidez moi, je vous prie, mon cher ami, de vos conseils; la santé me manque, et la situation des affaires m'accable de tristesse.

A letter I have received from General Yorke,* of the 1st instant, pleases me much; I see he is sincerely affected with what has happened. He says he hears much of a peace, but knows nothing certain about it; the reports here are still more vague than elsewhere. It is said a certain minister,† now in the Duke of Newcastle's place, will have peace *at any rate*. I heartily wish it may be a good one, but I very much fear the means we are pursuing will not lead us to such an one, and I cannot help dreading the worst, unless we should choose the shameful part of inactivity; and imitate that ignominious campaign of 1757, which I could wish blotted from the history of England.

I have one solid comfort in the midst of my most distressful situation; which is, that I have done my duty fairly, honestly, and freely, without consulting to please, or acquire friends. I have sacrificed my ambition to the public weal. I have, in some measure, regained the confidence of the hero, with whom I live; and he hears from me what, perhaps, he would not have patience to do from another. This is, in truth, the reason why I remain here. I do not think it impossible I may be recalled, though I have not asked it. I shall retire with pleasure; for I am well able to justify everything I have done. I heartily wish every man concerned in public business were in the same happy situation.

I have profited of this opportunity to pour out my soul to you; it affords me consolation, and I have only

* Better known as Sir Joseph Yorke, the able ambassador at the Hague.

† The Earl of Bute.

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to desire that when you have read this letter, you will commit it to the flames, and write to me by Prussian courier, or otherwise, as often as you can. I ever am, with the most sincere affection,

ANDREW MITCHELL.

P. S.—When I think of our master, all the sentiments of tenderness, duty and affection, rise up in my mind. I am afflicted beyond measure. In case you should have had no copy of the *memorable* answer to my dispatch of the 4th May, I must acquaint you, that no subsidy is granted for this year, to the King of Prussia! The reasons are indeed extraordinary; palliate this as well as you can. One day or other, I hope to communicate to you the true one, which I think I have, by chance, discovered. A. M.

It was during the period of gradual estrangement on the part of that monarch from the friendship and alliance of England, which the measures of the new ministry had created, and which ended in the rupture above alluded to, that a correspondence (under the circumstances, peculiarly flattering) took place between the Great Frederick and Mr. Keith; the more honourable to the latter, that while supporting with his interest (at that time paramount with the youthful Emperor of Russia) the legitimate views of peace of the Prussian sovereign, he was above purchasing a continuance of his favour by any compromise of the just claims of England, and was quite prepared to vindicate her policy (as regarded the defence of Portugal especially) even against so redoubtable, as well as courteous an antagonist.

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THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO MR. KEITH.*

Breslau, 18th February, 1762.

SIR,

Feelingly alive as I am to all the proofs of affection and attachment which you have hitherto shewn me, I have resolved no longer to delay expressing my gratitude. I beg you to be persuaded that I shall ever give you credit for them; and that I shall seize with pleasure all the opportunities which may present themselves, to give you convincing proofs of my esteem. In the meantime, you will oblige me by delivering the inclosed to my colonel, Baron de Goltz, who will arrive ere long † at the Court where you are. And I humbly pray God to have you, Sir, in his high and holy keeping.

FREDERICK.

That the King of Prussia, at the most depressed and critical period in his affairs, had a staunch defender at the then hostile Court of Petersburgh in Mr. Keith, appears from a very interesting conversation held by the latter with the Chancellor of the Empire, Count Shouwaloff, on the politics of Europe. On the proposal, already alluded to, of Russia assuming and retaining possession of Prussia, the British Minister thus writes:—"In that case I could assure him that the war was not near an end; for that I mistook the King of Prussia's character greatly, if that prince would not choose to lay himself under the *ruins of his last town*,

* Translated from the French originals in the possession of the Earl of Hardwicke.

† On a mission connected with the peace with Russia, which Mr. Keith was mainly instrumental in concluding.

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rather than submit to such ignominious conditions. I said further, that their keeping that province would be a perpetual object of jealousy to other powers, and a source of troubles in Europe, as there was not a single power in it, but had an essential interest in preventing it; or if by some great fatality it could not, at present, be hindered, to join with the rest in laying hold of the first opportunity of wresting it out of their hands. Monsieur Shouwaloff, again, could not see that the possession of so '*small a province,*' should give jealousy to the rest of Europe; ending with this, that it might at least be left in their hands, as a *deposit*, till other means of indemnification could be found. I replied, that neither keeping it in possession, or deposit, was even to be thought of; and that, if either of them were ever seriously proposed, it would give cause of jealousy to all the world; as it would indicate clearly a design in Russia to make herself mistress of the navigation of the Baltic, and, consequently, to engross to herself the whole commerce of the North; to which I added, smiling, the late design of seizing the city of Dantzick, evidently pointed."

The extent of the obligations to Mr. Keith's influence with the new Emperor of Russia, which the King of Prussia so amply and readily acknowledged, may be gathered from the letter announcing the first step of a then auspicious reign.

MR. KEITH TO THE EARL OF HOLDERNESSE.

Petersburgh, Dec. 28th—Jan. 8th—1761-2.

My Lord,

In my letter of the 5th, which goes likewise by this courier, I informed your Lordship of the death

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of the late Empress, and of the accession of the present Emperor* to the throne. I am now to acquaint you that the same evening that the Empress died, Baron Lefort, great master of the ceremonies, came to my house (as he did to those of the other foreign ministers), and let us know that the next morning the Emperor and Empress would receive our compliments in the gallery at Court, *sans cérémonie*. I went to Court next morning accordingly, and their Majesties, appearing together, received us most graciously; and we had afterwards the honour of dining with them at a table of an hundred covers, where everybody (not excepting the Emperor and Empress) drew for their places. But what I principally write this for, is to apprise your Lordship that the Emperor (who has always honoured me with his good graces) came up to me in the circle, and told me in my ear that *he hoped I would be pleased with him*, as the *night before* he had despatched couriers to the several bodies of his army, with orders not to advance farther into the Prussian territory, and to abstain from all hostility. I have been since told that those orders were accompanied with directions to the respective commanding generals to agree to an armistice, if proposed by the Prussians. It is farther said, that General Czernicheff has particular orders to separate his corps from the Austrians, and, before he begins his march, to send a trumpet to the Austrian head-quarters, to let them know that he was marching back with the troops under his command, without committing the smallest act of hostility.

The courier being upon the point of setting out, I have only time to add my compliments of congratulation to your Lordship upon this happy turn of affairs;

* The unfortunate Peter III., the husband of Catharine II.

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by the means of which I hope the King of Prussia will get happily out of the war, and his Majesty be able to put an end to his particular quarrel with France, in a way glorious to himself and advantageous to his people. I should be glad to have your Lordship's orders as soon as possible, as I should think this no unfavourable time to bring the treaty of commerce on the carpet. I have reason to think that the Emperor is greatly animated against the Court of Denmark, insomuch that it is to be feared that if means are not found to soften him, he may proceed to extremities against them. I think it absolutely necessary for the King's service, that I should have credit for some money, to be properly disposed of.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. K.

MR. KEITH TO THE EARL OF BUTE.

St. Petersburgh, January 12th, 1762.

My Lord,

Things go on here in the same favourable course as they did when I had last the honour of writing to your Lordship; and the Emperor makes no secret of his intentions of bringing about a peace upon just and reasonable terms. His Imperial Majesty, upon every occasion, expresses a dislike to France, and to everything that comes from France; and as a proof of it, the whole company of French comedians are discharged from the service of the Court.

Before the Adjutant-general Godowitz set out on his mission to the King of Prussia,* the Emperor was

* With an amicable notification of the Emperor's accession to the throne.

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graciously pleased to send that gentleman to me, in order to know if I had any particular commands for him. It happened that when he called, I was just gone from home, to stand godfather at the christening of a child of one of our merchants; and my servants having directed him into the room where all the company was met, he told me, before them, that he was come with a message to me from the Emperor; upon which I took him into another room, and he having delivered his message as above, I replied that I had nothing to add to what I had said in a letter to Mr. Mitchell, with which I knew he was charged; but that I could assure him he would find that minister willing and ready to serve him in every shape; and that he might open himself to him without reserve, he being a person of sense and honour. At taking leave I did not fail to charge him with my humble acknowledgments to the Emperor for this mark of his grace and confidence. Your Lordship may easily imagine that the company was a little surprised at this extraordinary visit; and as there were thirty men and women present, the thing could not fail of being soon whispered all over the town, and consequently to give occasion to much discourse and to various speculations. I cannot say that I approved of all the particulars of Monsieur Godowitz's instructions; but I am persuaded that, in the main, they are such as we could wish them: and, indeed, I own that my hopes rise daily with regard to public affairs; and, in the meantime, I hear that the Imperial ambassador and Monsieur Bréteuil are greatly disconcerted, and cannot conceal their uneasiness.

With respect to the interior of the empire, it was impossible for his Imperial Majesty to conduct himself more wisely, or with more dignity, than he has done in every step of his government; the favours he has

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bestowed have been, in general, upon very worthy subjects, and in the most gracious manner; and no one hardship, of any kind, has been put upon any one person, the few that have lost their places having fallen in the gentlest manner. Old Count Lestock was sent for from his exile the very evening of the accession. Count Horst, since his release, has received a thousand marks of the Emperor's favour: he has had the honour of dining with him, and had a sword sent him by his Majesty, with this message, that it was Prussian, and that he had worn it himself several times.

MR. KEITH TO THE EARL OF BUTE.

St. Petersburgh, January 26th, 1762.

My Lord,

I did not intend to give your Lordship any trouble by this post, but the Emperor having done me the unexpected honour of a visit this afternoon, I could not help apprising your Lordship of it, and I have the pleasure of acquainting you at the same time, that his Imperial Majesty expressed in the strongest terms his friendship for our Royal Master, and his resolution of connecting himself in the strictest manner with the King and his Prussian Majesty; but I defer the particular account of our conversation till I write by Collins, who (by concert with the Emperor) is to set out on Saturday next. His Imperial Majesty fixed upon that day, as he was pleased to invite himself to supper at my house for Friday evening, and that perhaps he might think of some new orders to give me upon that occasion.

But here I must not omit apprising your Lordship of a most noble action of the Emperor's, who, having gone for the first time in great state to the senate, on

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Thursday last, did there declare the nobility and gentry of Russia to be free, and in every respect on the same footing with the nobility of the other kingdoms of Europe, with liberty to enter or not into the service of any foreign state, without the permission of the Emperor, or his successors to the throne. Your Lordship may easily imagine the astonishment and pleasure with which the nobility received this royal boon, and the inward satisfaction with which they must have felt themselves from slaves at once become freemen, and really gentlemen. The Emperor, in gratifying that rank of his subjects, did not forget the lower part of his people, for he, at the same time, reduced the price of salt to a moderate price; and by a pragmatic, irrevocable sanction, declared that it shall never exceed the price now fixed. This will be a considerable diminution of his revenue; but his Imperial Majesty could have done nothing of such consequence for the ease and relief of the poor. This magnanimity and generosity cannot fail of gaining the hearts of his people, and will at the same time raise his Imperial Majesty's character to the highest degree in the eyes of all the nations of Europe.

January 29th, 1762.

The Emperor goes on in doing good to particular persons, and in conferring the greatest benefits upon his people. His last act of abolishing the private Chancery, or Inquisition of State, is looked upon as the greatest blessing that could have happened to the nation; that abominable tribunal being in all respects as bad, and in some worse, than the Spanish Inquisition.

P. S.—I cannot yet pretend to give your Lordship a true view of the interior of this new Court; in the

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meantime, it does not appear that the Empress is hitherto much consulted in business.*

It has been seen that Baron de Goltz had been sent on a pacific mission by the King of Prussia, to the new Emperor's Court, under Mr. Keith's auspices. Of the facilities procured for him, and the success of his overture, we have the following account, dated February 28th, 1762:—

"Baron Goltz has had the opportunity of several conversations with the Emperor, and yesterday morning his Majesty told him he wished to conclude the peace with the King his master, as soon as possibly could be; and that he wished his Prussian Majesty would transmit hither a plan of a treaty for that purpose: to which Monsieur Goltz answered, that he being actually provided with full powers, he thought it might be a saving of time if his Imperial Majesty would be pleased to communicate his thoughts upon the subject. To this the Emperor replied, with great frankness and generosity, that he would restore every inch of ground conquered by the Russian arms; and upon Monsieur Goltz's insinuating that the King his master would expect the guarantee of Silesia, the Emperor appeared willing to agree to it, saying, however, that he should expect, in return, his Prussian Majesty's guarantee for his ducal dominions.†

* A significant remark, as connected with what followed.

† The question now so recently agitated, similarly occupied at that time the public mind of Europe. Shortly before the Emperor's accession, Mr. Keith had thus written on the subject:—

"The affair of Holstein is now put upon quite a new footing, for in place of the exchange of the Grand Duke's part of that Duchy against Oldenburg, what Denmark now proposes is, that by the mediation of the Courts of Vienna and Paris which this Court makes her hope for,

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"As Col. Goltz is resolved to sign upon these terms, I think it not impossible that this important affair may be carried into execution in a few days. This news appeared to me of so much consequence, that I thought it proper to transmit it by Estafette to Berlin.

"I had the honour of his Imperial Majesty's company yesterday at dinner at my house; he having been pleased to invite himself, upon hearing that the two princes of Holstein, with some others of the great people, had made a party to eat soup with me."

"*March* 23*rd.*

"On Sunday morning last, just before mass, I had the honour to be admitted to an audience of the Emperor, and in delivering his Majesty's letter, I made the King's compliments to his Imperial Majesty as nearly as I could in the terms of my instructions, and I ended by saying, that the King wished the first step of his Imperial Majesty's reign might be the restoring the public tranquillity, that he might thereby acquire the glorious title of the peace-maker of Europe.

"The King's compliments were received with great satisfaction and cordiality. His Imperial Majesty said he was particularly obliged to the King for his friendly wishes; that he should think himself happy to deserve that title, and was ready to contribute all in his power towards accomplishing that great and salutary work.

the Great Duke shall make over to his Danish Majesty all that he possesses in Holstein, and renounce all his pretensions upon Sleswick; in consideration of which, the King of Denmark will take upon himself all the debts his Imperial Highness has contracted upon Holstein, will lay him down instantly one hundred and fifty thousand roubles, and pay him an hundred thousand every year, till the Grand Duke shall mount the throne of Russia. I do not hear that his Imperial Highness has yet come into these proposals, and I believe it is not very certain that he ever will."

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"The company at dinner consisted of near forty persons, ladies and gentlemen, and in the middle of the first service, his Imperial Majesty drank the King of Prussia's health, as chief of the order of the Black Eagle, * in a *Bocal*, † which went round the company, under a discharge of fifty pieces of cannon. Towards the end of dinner, the Emperor stood up, with a *Bocal* in his hand, and addressing himself to me, said, he was going to propose the best health in the world to me, viz.:—a general and happy peace,—which was drunk by all the company, I believe with real satisfaction: and as the toast had been addressed to me, I rose, and going behind the Emperor's chair, with the glass in my hand, which I drank off, I returned my humble thanks for the health, and for the honour his Imperial Majesty had done me in addressing it to me."

THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO MR. KEITH.

Breslau, March 24th, 1762.

SIR,

The sentiments of affection and attachment, of which your letter of the 15th contains the renewed expression, are infinitely agreeable to me. I *know their value;* and shall not fail to proportion my gratitude. It were to be wished that all the ministers of Britain were animated with the same zeal for my interests, and that they felt, like yourself, their intimate connexion with those of their master, and that they cannot be neglected without prejudice, at the same time, to those of his Britannic Majesty. It appears to me, however, that the affairs of Portugal have unhappily done injury to those of Germany, in the heads of some of the

* He had that day received the insignia of the Order from the King of Prussia. † A large goblet used for drinking peculiar healths.

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Ministry; and I suspect they will discover, but too late, the illusion they have created to themselves on that head. As for yourself, Sir, I have a better opinion of your enlightened mind; and every reason to flatter myself that you will never suffer yourself to be influenced on this subject; and that feeling all the inconsistency of such principles, you will continue, as in past times, to have my interests at heart, and to assist with your good counsels the Baron de Goltz, in the important commission with which I have charged him at the Court where you reside.

I am delighted that you are pleased with his conduct; and I trust he will do all in his power to deserve your friendship, which I beg of you to continue towards him; and to be persuaded that I shall eagerly embrace every occasion that may present itself, to requite the obligation, and to prove to you the reality of my esteem for a minister who is so *worthy of it as yourself.*

Wherefore I pray God, &c.,

FREDERICK.

MR. KEITH TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA, IN REPLY.

Petersburgh, April 28th—May 9th, 1762.

SIR,

I take the liberty of laying myself at the feet of your Majesty, with my very sincere congratulations on the conclusion of the peace between your Majesty and your august friend, the Emperor of Russia; and I hope that this grand event will enable your Majesty to resist with advantage all your enemies, and serve at the same time as the first step towards that general tranquillity of which Europe stands so much in need. I avail myself also of this opportunity to return my thanks to your Majesty for the last letter you were

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good enough to write to me; which did me the highest honour, by the tokens of benignity with which it was filled, and to which I should not have failed to make an earlier reply, had I not feared to become troublesome by unnecessarily multiplying my letters.

With regard to what your Majesty is pleased to remark in your's respecting Portugal, your Majesty is too well informed of our relations with that country, and the advantages we derive from its commerce, to be surprised to see us strain every nerve to maintain its independence. I am persuaded, however, that this will not prevent our Court from fulfilling its engagements with all its allies; and especially with your Majesty, whose heroic virtues are objects of veneration to the entire nation. Monsieur de Goltz has had an opportunity of showing what he is, and his first attempt gives promise that he will one day become a very useful servant to your Majesty.

I beg to return my acknowledgments for all your Majesty's favours, and am, with the most profound respect,

Your Majesty's
Very humble, very obedient,
And very devoted servant,
R. KEITH.

THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO MR. KEITH.

Head Quarters, Breslau, May 22nd, 1762.

MONSIEUR L'ENVOYE DE KEITH,

Your letter of the 9th of this month gave me real pleasure, and I am the more obliged to you for the congratulations you address to me on the conclusion of my peace with the Emperor of Russia, that I can

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only attribute the success of this negotiation to the *zeal with which you exerted yourself to make it succeed.* It is a work *due to your efforts alone;* and I shall cherish for it a gratitude proportioned to the important service which, on this occasion, you have rendered me.

The reflections you make on the obligation your Court feels itself under to support Portugal appear to me very just; and I shall never be the man to condemn a power *which fulfils its engagements.* If the views of my Lord Bute, in making overtures to the Court of Vienna, have been to detach her from France, I can, in that case, find nothing to blame in them. You are, no doubt, aware that the British Ministry is at this moment taking steps for renewing the negotiation with the Court of Versailles. I doubt, however, if this affair will assume any shape, before the end of the present campaign; and I greatly apprehend that the French are merely seeking to *keep up the game.**

Wherefore I pray, &c.

FREDERICK.

The irony—(especially regarding powers which "fulfil their engagements," and the secret manœuvres of the British Ministry) which runs through this epistle, will appear more *piquant* when we remember that the despatch so feelingly deprecated by Sir Andrew Mitchell, virtually breaking off the long-established relations between Great Britain and Prussia, bore nearly the same date as the above.

* In the original "*amuser le tapis,*" anglicé "humbugging you."

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MR. KEITH TO MR. GRENVILLE.*

St. Petersburgh, July 2-13, 1762.

SIR,

Last Friday morning, (the day that, by the Emperor's orders, I was to meet him at Peterhoff), about nine o'clock, one of my servants came running into my bed-chamber with a frighted countenance, and told me that there was a great uproar at the other end of the town; that the guards having mutinied, were assembled, and talked of no less than dethroning the Emperor. He could tell me no other circumstances, nor could give me any answer to the only question I asked, namely, if the Empress was in town; but about a quarter of an hour after, one of the gentlemen of our factory came in, and informed me that the Empress was in town; that she had been declared by the guards and the other troops of the garrison their Empress and Sovereign, and that she was there actually at the Kasansky Church to hear mass, and the *Te Deum* sung upon the occasion. He added the circumstance of Prince George of Holstein Gottorps being made prisoner as he was endeavouring to get out of town. This account was soon confirmed from all quarters, and we understood that all the colleges of the empire, and all the great people in town, were taking the oaths of fidelity to the Empress, as the guards and other military corps had already done.

This surprising revolution was brought about and completed in less than two hours, without one drop of blood being spilt, or any act of violence committed

* The original despatch containing the account of the deposition of the Emperor Peter III. and the usurpation of Catharine II., has been deemed a necessary conclusion to the previous correspondence.

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and all the parts of the city at any distance from the palace, especially the street where I and the greatest part of his Majesty's subjects reside, was as quiet as if nothing extraordinary had happened: the only novelty to be seen was some piquets placed at the bridges and corners of the streets, and some of the horse-guards patrolling in order to preserve the public tranquillity.

As soon as the guards had assembled in the morning, several detachments were sent out on the Peterhoff road, to hinder any intelligence from being sent to the Emperor, and they performed that piece of duty with so much diligence and exactness, that not a single person got through, except Leon Alexandrowitch Narishkin, the Master of Horse, and Count Rosman Larivonitch Woronzow.

About eight o'clock that same evening, the Empress on horseback marched out of town, at the head of 10,000 or 12,000 men, with a great train of artillery, on the road to Peterhoff, in order to attack the Emperor, whether at Peterhoff or Oranienbaum; and the next day, in the afternoon, we received the accounts of his Imperial Majesty having, without striking a stroke, surrendered his person, and resigned his crown. The few authentic circumstances of this great event which I have been able to pick up, are, that this affair had been long contriving, but was hastened in the execution by one of the conspirators having been arrested the day before, upon some indignant words he had let drop; this alarmed the others, who, for fear of a total discovery, resolved to go to work immediately, and in consequence, sent some of their number in the night-time to Peterhoff to apprise the Empress, and to represent the necessity of her repairing to town without loss of time. It was, I think, one Orlow, formerly an officer in the artillery, who was charged with this

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commission, and who having got admission about four in the morning into her Imperial Majesty's bed-chamber, informed her of her danger. Accordingly, as soon as she could get dressed, the Empress slipped out of the palace, some say by a back door, others by a window, without one single servant of either sex; and after several little accidents, such as horses tiring, &c., arrived in town about six o'clock, and went herself to the *Caserne* of the Ismaeloffskey guards, which she found under arms, with their colonel, the Hetman Rasomowsky, at their head, ready to receive her. As for the Emperor, he had not the least suspicion or information of the affair till between eleven and twelve in the forenoon, when, being upon the road from Oranienbaum to Peterhoff, he was met by a servant of Leon Narishkin, who acquainted him with the situation of affairs in town. His Majesty had proceeded to Peterhoff, and he learned there the manner which the Empress had left that place, her departure having been concealed by the bed-chamber women from the ladies and other courtiers, by the pretence of indisposition.

From that moment there was nothing but confusion and despair amongst the Emperor's small court, and no resolution of any kind was taken till very late in the evening, when his Imperial Majesty, with all his train, ladies and gentlemen, went on board of a galley that rode before Peterhoff, and rowed over to Cronstadt in the hopes of being received there; but Telegin, a Commissioner of the Admiralty, and Mardison, a Vice-Admiral, who were sent down in the morning from Petersburgh, had got the start of him, and when the Emperor approached the harbour, he was not only refused admittance, but threatened to be fired upon. The confusion and despair, as you may easily imagine, were now greatly increased, and the galley, with the

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other boats that attended, returned, taking different routes, some to Peterhoff, and the Emperor to Oranienbaum, with a very small attendance.

On the morning of Saturday, on hearing that the Empress was drawing near with so great a force, the Emperor sent Prince Galitzin and General Ismaeloff to her Majesty with proposals, and after some time Ismaeloff returned with a paper, ready drawn up, containing a resignation of the crown, which the Emperor signed, and then got into a coach along with that officer, and took the road to Peterhoff; but whither he was carried, or where he is now, I am absolutely ignorant.

It is reported that in the above-mentioned paper there was a clause, declaring that the Emperor should have liberty to retire to Holstein, if he thought proper.

Thus ended this extraordinary and important transaction, and her Imperial Majesty, after passing the night at a country house of Prince Kurakin's, returned to town on Sunday morning; and having heard, in passing, mass at the Admiralty church, went straight to the summer palace, where she and her son, the Grand Duke, have taken up their residence, and where people of all degrees were admitted to kiss her hands. With regard to the motives of this sudden revolution, it is plain that the resumption of the Church lands, and the neglect of the clergy, were the principal; and the next to these, the severe discipline which the Emperor endeavoured to introduce among the troops, particularly the guards, who had been accustomed to great idleness and leisure; and the discontent was heightened by the resolution his Imperial Majesty had taken of carrying a great part of that corps into Germany with him, in order to make war upon Denmark, a measure disagreeable to the whole nation, who lamented greatly their

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being drawn into new expenses and new dangers, for the *Duchy of Holstein*, (which they considered as a trifling object, and entirely indifferent to Russia,) just after the Emperor had sacrificed the conquests made by the Russian army, and which were of importance to Russia, to his friendship for the King of Prussia. Several other small circumstances, greatly exaggerated and artfully represented and improved, contributed greatly to the fall of this unhappy Prince, who had many excellent qualities, and never did a violent or cruel action in the course of his short reign; but who, from aversion to business, and the unhappy choice of favourites, who encouraged him in it, let everything fall into confusion, and from a false notion he had adopted of having fixed the affections of the nation, by favours conferred in the beginning of his reign, fell into an indolence and security which proved fatal to him. I cannot help adding that not only myself, but several persons of sense and discernment, thought that we could perceive a considerable difference in the Prince from what he was for some months after he mounted the throne; and that the perpetual hurry in which he lived, and the flattery of the vile people about him, had in some degree affected his understanding. To conclude, I must acknowledge that I did not apprehend this revolution would have happened so soon, but I always thought that if he left his dominions it would prove fatal to him; and for that reason, I used every possible means to divert him from his intended journey, as well by insinuations to himself, as by representing the danger of that measure to those who had a title to offer him their advice.

Last night, about ten o'clock, I received a message, desiring me to be at Court this morning at eleven: and having gone accordingly, I found all the foreign minis-

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ters there, and we were soon after introduced to her Majesty's presence, and had the honour to kiss her hand, in doing which I took occasion to make her the proper compliment in his Majesty's name, which was kindly received, and returned in very handsome terms; and upon the whole, my reception was very good. Those who made the greatest figure were the Hetman, and the Orlow who has been before mentioned, who wore the ribbon of St. Alexander and the key of chamberlain.

Separate, and sent by the same messenger:—

"*St. Petersburg, July 3rd*, 1762.

"You may easily imagine the concern this sudden revolution has given me, more particularly as I am not without apprehension (besides the gratitude I owed to the unfortunate Emperor for all the marks of his grace and condescension), that it may very much affect the general system of affairs, and those of the King of Prussia in particular; but of this I can only guess at present. However, I shall make it my endeavour to get the best lights I can of the disposition of this Court, to transmit them to you.

"What I am going to add is principally with regard to myself. You, Sir, and the rest of his Majesty's servants, will have plainly seen, in what passed with relation to Mr. W——, that I am not so happy as to be in the Empress's favour, and I have particular reasons to be convinced of that truth; this obliges me, as a faithful servant to the King, to declare to you that I think his Majesty's affairs would suffer by passing through my hands; and therefore it is my earnest desire to have my recall sent to me as soon as possible, and another

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minister sent in my place; for I should think myself very unhappy if any part of the King's business should miscarry from any defect in my person, either real, or in the opinion of the new sovereign of this country."

"*July 5th.*

"I am more and more confirmed in my opinion that his Majesty's service requires another minister at this court than myself; and therefore I must renew* my request of having my recall; and it will be a particular grace if the King will allow me to set out from hence immediately after I shall have received it, that I may make my journey home before the bad season comes on."

It would appear from the above, as well as from a previous correspondence, that the favour, always employed for the most legitimate ends, and the deference shown, in his earlier measures (well would it have been for the young Emperor, had it been universal!) to the councils of Mr. Keith, had naturally, perhaps, created some jealousy in the mind of his ambitious partner, the future Catherine the Second. And though (as documents still existing prove) an unworthy intrigue, on the part of a junior scion of the diplomatic body, to fasten on Mr. Keith the imputation of conduct towards her, while yet Grand Duchess, equally foreign to his head and heart, signally and triumphantly failed—yet, on her accession, advantage seems to have been taken of it, and of Mr. Keith's resignation, to revive a punctilio, dispensed with when Peter the Third mounted the throne at his *express request*, requiring that an ambassador-extraordinary, in the person of a nobleman

* The disinterestedness of this suggestion must do honour to the writer's character. It was the third time the request had been made during his mission.

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of high rank, should proceed to Petersburgh, as the bearer of his sovereign's congratulations on the event.

To this arrangement Mr. Keith, whose indignant repudiation of the charge of disrespect towards Catherine while still an injured wife and oppressed princess, form a striking episode in a life of which mildness and urbanity were the distinguishing characteristics *—very willingly assented. Nor is it to be supposed that one, to whom the brief career of her unfortunate husband had been an object of pitying and almost parental interest, could have derived much satisfaction from an elevation to power founded not merely on the deposition, but the subsequent murder of a young prince, whose original tendencies were amiable, and the dawnings of whose reign gave promise of great qualities, unhappily stifled and obscured by the excesses of intemperance and influence of improper associates. The very clinging of the unhappy young man, even while surrounded by these, and in spite of the envoy's faithful remonstrances, to the mentor whose counsels he disregarded (for he had made a point of Mr. Keith's spending, at Oranienbaum, the very week during which his arrest took place), showed that respect for virtue and gratitude for kindness had still a hold on his mind. To the existence of corresponding feelings in the British minister's breast, we have the testimony of Princess Dashkoff, little likely, from her share in the rebellion

* It led, though, during the period of his highest influence and consideration at the Court of Petersburgh, to his instant resignation of the Embassy, and when prevailed on by earnest representations from home to retain it, he thus notices in a postscript the unworthy cause of suspicion: "The disagreements between Mr. ——— and myself proceeded entirely from his insolent behaviour; and our reconciliation was owing to the most absolute, I might say, the lowest submission on his part, as his letter to me" [still extant] "will justify."

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which placed Catherine on the throne, to be partial to any one who had treated her with indignity. "The only foreign minister," writes she, in her Memoirs, "at all in the Emperor's favour, except the Prussian, was the English ambassador, Mr. Keith. Prince Dashkoff and I lived in the greatest intimacy with this most respectable old gentleman, who treated me with as much tenderness as if I had been his daughter (as he often used to call me). At one of our little parties at his house, when there was no one present but Prince Galitzin, I remember his saying, in speaking of the Emperor (*with many expressions of regret*), that as he had begun his reign with a determination of gaining his people's love, he would certainly end it by gaining nothing but their contempt."

Whatever might be the ministerial objects which led to the substitution above alluded to, of a nobleman of high rank and ample fortune, in the room of an humbler, though faithful and long-tried servant of the crown, nothing could be more courteous and flattering than the expressions on the occasion, of the then Secretary of State to Mr. Keith.

Lord Barrington thus conveys, through the channel of the new ambassador, his sentiments towards his predecessor :—

Cavendish Square, August 12th, 1762.

DEAR SIR,

I have taken the liberty to trouble Lord Buckingham with this letter, containing real assurances of the most affectionate esteem and regard for you. The conduct you have invariably held through life, entitles you to claim them from every man who has good sentiments in his own mind, or values them in the minds of others.

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I must, at the same time, express my satisfaction at your return home. When Russia takes one valuable friend from me, she restores me another. I hope you will remain here long after Lord Buckingham shall return, and enjoy at home the rewards your long and faithful labours abroad deserve. I ought to have added the ability with which you have served your king and country: but that is too well known to suffer loss from any omission of mine. I beg you will believe me to be, at all times, and on all occasions, with the most perfect esteem,

Dear Sir,
Your most faithful and obedient servant,
BARRINGTON.

Among the most distinguished of the friends for life, whom his, in other respects, uncongenial exile enabled Mr. Keith to secure, were the princes of the Polish House of Czartoriski, whose patriotism has always assigned to them the loftiest place in the annals of their oppressed and unhappy country, while their amiable qualities in private life rendered them equally objects of esteem and regard to the persons of all nations who shared their splendid hospitality.

"The two brothers Czartoriski," writes Lord Malmesbury, in 1767, "have public dinners and suppers every day for as many as please to come; and these two houses are the great resort of strangers. Each house may be looked upon as a town, as there are in it all sorts of artificers, and a great *seigneur* need never send out of his own walls for anything. Prince Czartoriski's personal attendants and servants amount to 375. The number in his country-house is infinitely greater, besides his troops, which consist of 3000 or 4000 men.

"Prince Czartoriski, Great Chancellor of Lithuania,

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and eldest uncle to the King, was destined by the Empress to be *crushed;* and she had, by her ambassador, signified to him that if he did not lay down his charge, and return *à ses terres,* he should be tried, condemned, and *executed.* His answer was, 'Je n'ai pas reçu mon emploi de sa Majesté Impériale, ainsi elle me pardonnera si je ne veux en rien, m'en défaire à sa requête.' His fate was determined and foreseen, for the next meeting of the Diet; and in the interim that venerable man," continues Lord Malmesbury, who dined with him frequently, "did the honours of his long table with the utmost calmness to strangers, inquiring of them, with the greatest ease and good humour, about the manners of their respective countries. This, which at any time would have been striking in a man near fourscore, was peculiarly so in one at the time under sentence of death. The King's greater humanity saved him; for the Czarina had opposed him strongly; yet Poniatowski, to his credit be it spoken,* exerted himself so warmly, and made such a point of getting his pardon, that the Empress granted it."

It was at an earlier period, while Peter the Third still held his short-lived sway, and while the influence over him for good, possessed by Mr. Keith, found appropriate exercise in the assignment of honours, where honour was so justly due, that the following letters were written; and it is pleasing to be assured that the expressions of esteem and affection with which they teem were not mere words of course, or the overflowings of momentary gratitude for benefits received, but borne out by persevering attachment on the part of the writers, not only towards him to whom they were addressed, but his son,

* This alludes to his personal unpopularity with Poniatowski, of which proofs will appear in the correspondence.

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Sir Robert Murray Keith. The tenor of the first, from Prince Augustus, the then head of that illustrious family, bears testimony to the influence of Mr. Keith at the Court of Petersburgh.

PRINCE CZARTORISKI TO MR. KEITH.*

Pulawy, June 2nd, 1762.

SIR,

I am at a loss to find terms to express to you all the extent of my gratitude; but I flatter myself you cannot doubt of my extreme sensibility to the friendship and the goodness with which you have interested yourself on the subject of the *Cordon Bleu* of Russia, in favour of my son. It was delivered to him yesterday by the Russian Envoy.

An universal suffrage has long assured to you the public esteem. You have given me reason to owe to you, in addition, and for life, the truest attachment and gratitude.

Permit me to inclose a letter for his Imperial Majesty, entreating you to present it at a proper opportunity. It contains my thanks to this great Prince, who, by the first steps of his reign, has rendered himself an object of devoted admiration.† I should enter into details, did I not know you to be sufficiently informed on the state of our Court. The ills of our country are too well known; time alone can bring them any remedy. As for our private interests, certain persons continue to make it their business to render myself and my family odious to the King. Favours commonly granted to others

* Translated from the original in French.

† It must be recollected that this was written during that early period of the young Emperor's reign which gave rise to similar sentiments throughout Europe.

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to us are uniformly refused. I desire permission to resign to my children the starosties which I possess, and to my son the regiment of guards which I command. All my solicitations to the above effect have hitherto proved in vain. Our crime is that of being good patriots,* in the eyes of persons to whom the welfare of their country is matter of indifference. My sole confidence now is in your support. Endeavour, I beseech you, to obtain from his Imperial Majesty a positive order to his minister at Warsaw, to enforce at our Court what I am soliciting. All the difficulties would then, I have no doubt, be instantly removed. I remain, with the highest consideration,

Your Excellency's, most humbly,

AUGUSTUS CZARTORISKI.

That the son was not behind the parent in warmth of feeling and expression, this playful polyglot epistle proves, as well as that English was then successfully cultivated in Poland. The amiable and well-known Prince Adam thus writes:—

A Varsovie, 12me Mai, 1762.

MONSIEUR,

Par le plaisir que vous trouvez à obliger vos amis, vous devez imaginer celui que l'on ressent à devoir

* The patriotism of the family of Czartorinski, synonymous through life with its illustrious name, cannot, perhaps, be more fully estimated than by stating a fact which came under the Editor's personal knowledge. After the last and bloodiest of the revolutions in that unhappy country, (their part in which was merely the moderate and inevitable one forced on them by their proud position) the inheritors of all the splendours formerly described, and actual possessors, at the commencement of the insurrection, of the vast revenues of the family—were negotiating for the lease of a humble cottage in Wales, their total expenditure in which was to be necessarily limited to £250 per annum.

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à ceux qu'on aime. J'ai reçu la lettre dont vous m'avez honoré; and *I wish I could persuade you of my gratitude, as much as I am convinced myself of the warmth of your friendship. I am only sorry that, by all probability, I am destined to be an useless, though very warm, friend to you.* Je n'aurais pas fini de long temps, si je voulais vous dire la reconnaissance dont mon cœur est rempli pour vous. Votre amitié m'a suivi partout; et je me croirais bien heureux, si quelque occasion me présentait le moyen de vous prouver, que personne ne vous aime et vous honore plus sincèrement que celui qui a l'honneur d'être, Monsieur,

De votre Excellence, le très humble, et
très obéissant serviteur,
LE PRINCE ADAM CZARTORISKI.

Je voudrais pouvoir trouver pour vous de ces expressions dont parle Milton—

"Where more is meant than meets the ear."

Nor was it alone while enjoying, in the possession of official situation, the power of conferring obligations, that these tributes of affection smoothed for Mr. Keith the often painful path of duty. Long after his retirement from the service of his country, similar testimonies of unimpaired regard, from the great and good, came to cheer for him the evening of life. From these may be selected, for its octogenarian rarity, as well as intrinsic interest, one from the venerable Marshal Münnich,* whose counsels guided, under three successive reigns, the helm of affairs in his native country, and who, at 82, was not only still competent to an active

* The career of Count Münnich is one of the romances of real history. Generalissimo, under the Empress Anne, of the Russian army, which he entirely and beneficially new modelled, he fought, along with the celebrated Marshal Keith, then in the service of Russia, several memorable

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charge of public affairs, but to the task, enjoined on him by his talented royal mistress, Catherine, of writing for posterity the memoirs of his time.

The letter will derive interest from a scene, as described by Mr. Keith, to which even Russia, with its frequent mutations of favour and exile, could afford few parallels.

"The Duke of Courland, Biron, with his Duchess, arrived here on Tuesday night from their exile. He appeared in the drawing-room, with the blue ribbon of Russia, with which the Emperor had invested him, and his Imperial Majesty showed great distinction to the whole family. I went yesterday in the afternoon, to pay my respects to that Prince, and to Field Marshal Münnich, who arrived the night before, in perfect good health, and with all his faculties entire, though after an exile, or rather, prison of above *twenty years*, during which he was allowed to converse with no mortal but his own lady, and the few servants he had—and very rarely with the soldiers of his guard.

"Marshal Münnich was presented to the Emperor last Sunday, and in the evening the *Duke of Courland* and he appeared *together* in the circle, with their blue ribbons; and were both treated by his Majesty with great marks of distinction. It was really an affecting scene, to see those two illustrious persons, after having

campaigns against the Turks. Prime Minister under the Grand Duchess Anne, he had attained to such unlimited power and glory, that his ungrateful benefactress is said to have hinted, that being at the summit of both, he could never choose a better time *to die*. On the accession of Elizabeth he was sent to inhabit the dwelling in Siberia, of which his own pencil had given a sketch for his predecessor, the favourite Biron, Duke of Courland. Recalled by Peter the Third, he again attained the summit of power, and was (as will be seen) in equal favour with his successor Catherine; though, on account of his great age, not replaced at the helm of affairs.

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survived so long a course of misfortunes, appear again, at their age, at a Court where they had formerly made so great a figure; and to see them, that being their first interview, converse together with great civility, and without any appearance of that jealousy and animosity which had drawn all their unhappiness upon them. The Duke of Courland's two sons are both made Major-Generals, and Count Münnich is declared *first* Field-Marshal; Prince George of Holstein having, in a very handsome manner, quitted the *Pas* to him. The Emperor, to compliment him, gave, for the parole that evening—*'Vive le premier Felt Maréchal de Russie!'* The Duke of Courland is in the seventy-second year of his age, and Count Münnich in the seventy-ninth of his."

FIELD-MARSHAL MÜNNICH TO MR. KEITH.

SIR, *Petersburgh, August 16th*, 1764.

It is long since I received a letter which did me more honour or gave me more pleasure, than that with which you were pleased to favour me on the 18th of June last. I learned from it with satisfaction the re-establishment of your precious health, and the pleasing circumstances which attend you in your honourable retreat. I congratulate you upon them from the bottom of my heart, and add my best wishes for their satisfactory continuance; in which I shall always take the interest of a sincere friend.

The King could not more suitably exercise his liberality, than in granting you a pension of 1000*l.* per annum, in requital of your zeal and services. But you will allow me to say, that methinks his Majesty would have done better still, by retaining you in the ministry, and making use of your knowledge, abilities, and merits,

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than by consenting to your retirement. Great Britain must needs *abound* with able ministers, to be enabled to dispense with persons so enlightened, and so fully experienced in negotiations. I do not, however, esteem you the less happy. It must always be a happiness to enjoy, in *one's own country*, unbroken repose in the bosom of one's family, the rather that you have the satisfaction of witnessing the brilliant figure made by your sons; one of them, the Colonel,* making a tour in France, and experiencing there a distinguished reception; the younger, a Post-Captain,† returned to visit his parents, whom he knew but by reputation. May it please God to multiply, through this worthy offspring, your illustrious descendants, to the remotest posterity! At the age of eighty-two, I am, thank God, perfectly well! having just been making a tour, in the suite of her Majesty, to the ports of the Baltic confided to my care. I am writing, by order of my most gracious Sovereign, certain memoirs; but I do not get on very rapidly, from the infinity of business connected with the works under my charge: besides, being a man of war, I can boast but little of the qualifications for an author capable of satisfying the curious reader. I drink to your health very often, with my son, now President of the Board of Trade, who begs to assure you of his respects. Madame la Maréchale (as well as all belonging to me) is to you most respectfully devoted; and as for myself, I shall cease only with the latest of my days, to be, with the most indissoluble attachment,

Your very humble and very obedient servant, &c.,

LE COMTE DE MÜNNICH.

* Afterwards Sir Robert Murray Keith, K.B., Envoy Extraordinary at Vienna.

† Afterwards Admiral Sir Basil Keith, Governor of Jamaica.

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To be thus remembered, and by such a man, even after a two years' separation, was abundantly flattering; but, as in the instance now to be quoted, to have his memory cherished in Vienna, and that by one of its brightest ornaments, after fifteen years of absence, must have been still more so; and the sentiments are so gratifyingly expressed, both as regards Mr. Keith and his son and successor, by the amiable Princess Lichtenstein, that out of innumerable similar tributes to worth, of which all record might perish but for this timely publication, it has been selected as the concluding one.

PRINCESS LICHTENSTEIN TO MR. KEITH.*

Vienna, October 27th, 1773.

Permit me, Sir, to renew an old acquaintance, of which I have never lost sight; and of which, in spite of absence, my family and myself will always retain the recollection. I have even the presumption to believe that you do so likewise; and that you have not forgotten a city, and still less friends, who are so truly attached to you. All I can assure you of, without the slightest flattery, is, that your memory is there cherished and respected. I call to witness your son, who has every possible claim to be deemed worthy of belonging to such a father. He follows admirably in your footsteps, and makes himself equally esteemed and beloved. I have the extreme satisfaction of conversing with him sometimes about you; imagine what good we both say of you! He has had the kindness fully to detail to me the mode of life you lead; which appears to me highly

* Translated from the original in French.

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suited to your character.* Were it not for interrupting the tranquillity of this peaceful existence, and risking your health, I should be tempted to wish you might execute the projected idea of returning once more to visit us. But for the above double reason, I dare not desire it. One must love one's friends for their *own sake,* and not for *selfish considerations.*

You have lately lost here a truly respectable one, who held you dear until death. I speak of my worthy uncle, Prince Wenzel. From your reciprocal friendship, methinks you will value, and receive with pleasure, a medal which has been recently struck, by order of a sovereign who knows how to render justice to distinguished merits, which, among other instances, she has proved by the inscription—a very touching one. My whole family—my husband especially—charge me with a thousand tender compliments. Accept from myself the assurances of esteem, of friendship, and the most distinguished sentiments of

LA PRINCESSE DE LICHTENSTEIN.

It was, indeed, a course of life as enviable as its evening could possibly afford, to which the Princess so gracefully and feelingly alludes; and which, at the close of a long and laborious course in the public service, Mr. Keith was privileged to enjoy. "Love, honour, troops of friends," were literally, not figuratively, his; and

* Mr. Keith resided for the first ten years after his return to Scotland in a villa near Edinburgh, called "the Hermitage," where he indulged—(in imitation of his amiable and patriotic brother-in-law, Sir Alexander Dick)—in the pleasures of gardening. The finest, if not first, melons raised in his native country, are said to have been sent home by him from the southern provinces of Russia. That the finer fruits were even at that period successfully cultivated in Scotland, appears from a letter of Sir A. Dick, who writes in September, 1762, "We have, this year, a *more than common profusion* of perfectly ripe apricots, peaches, plums, and *figs.*"

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that in a dignified retreat in his beloved native country; in the bosom of a most affectionate and dutiful family, cheered by the society of the most distinguished men in Scotland,* while occasional visits to England (all of them connected with honourable events in the history of his sons) brought with them pleasing proofs that neither by his sovereign, nor by the friends whom, in public and private life, he had made for himself, were his merits forgotten, or his worth unappreciated.† It was on one of these occasions that Marshal Conway, writing to his friend Sir Robert Murray Keith, thus expressed himself:—"I had the pleasure of seeing your father before my departure; and can give you that of saying he seems to me to grow younger. I know I flatter such a son as you, in telling that news of *such a father*."

As a proof, ten years later, and within a few weeks of the close of Mr. Keith's life, of the continued good will of the sovereign he had faithfully served, as well as of his immediate principal in office, a letter from Lord Barrington, for its un-ministerial warmth, may claim insertion.

* A circle, then including its two eminent historians, Robertson and Hume, with whom Mr. Keith and his family lived in equal intimacy.

† Highly flattering autograph letters from the great Earl of Chatham, stating, on various occasions, the joint merits of father and sons, as grounds for the promotion of the latter, will find place elsewhere. It may not be inappropriate here to insert a note, written, on one of the visits above alluded to, by Mr. Pitt:—

"Mr. Pitt presents his compliments to Mr. Keith, and is extremely sensible of the obliging mark of his remembrance and friendship which the honour of his note conveys to him. He begs Mr. Keith and his sons will be assured that Mr. Pitt will always be happy and proud to have had any share in doing justice to *distinguished merit*, and that he esteems himself much honoured by so flattering a mention of his good wishes. Mr. Keith will be so good as to accept many sincere ones for his health and happiness.

"*Hayes, Sunday, June y^e 9th*, 1765."

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"Be assured, my dear and ever-valued friend, that neither you nor Mr. James Lindsay have been either forgotten or neglected; though till this day I have not been able to send you that good news for which we were both impatient. Your nephew is ensign in the 14th regiment, returning to England from North America; and commanded by Lieut.-General Keppel, and under him by Col. Dalrymple, brother to the Earl of Stair. I do not think he could have been placed more advantageously; and that must be some consolation to his friends for the delay. The king had *great pleasure* in giving a commission to a relation of your's; and if his Majesty had personally known you as long and intimately as his Secretary-at-War, he could not have spoken more justly or more kindly on your subject.

"I flatter myself that you enjoy your usual good health; which, added to an excellent mind and temper, the recollection of a life well spent, the full possession *universal esteem and respect,* and the satisfaction of having worthy and accomplished children, honourably established, must give you all the happiness of which human nature, towards the evening of life, is capable. That you may long enjoy these blessings is the earnest wish of,

"Dear Sir, your most faithful
"And most obedient servant,
"BARRINGTON."

Will it be thought indiscreet—in commemorating one whose public career has made him, in life and death, in some sort public property—to lift aside for a moment the veil of obscurity from that domestic circle, which, cheered by his vigorous mind and sunny disposition, to the utmost verge of human existence, was, alas! ere long to be bereaved by his unlooked-for

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removal? Four variously gifted, but all of them uncommon women (in an age especially when female cultivation was far from having attained its present standard), surrounded the "old hermit" at his fireside; transferred (happily as it would seem for the purposes of prompt and unceasing medical aid) not long before, from the villa named the *Hermitage*, to the house in the New Town of Edinburgh, whose erection had been long an object of pride and interest to his absent son.

A venerable aunt, step-sister only to the owner, but early thrown upon his kindness, and endeared by the very half century at least, of filial tenderness, lavished on the still lively *nonagenarian*—stood foremost on the list; and judging by the playful remembrances of her absent nephews, must have formed a delightful, as well as amiable* addition to the circle. The special care of this relic of former generations, as well as every other work of charity and benevolence, devolved on Mr. Keith's eldest daughter, whose name in the family, and far beyond it, of "St. Agnes," not only appropriately designated her character as it respected others, but, alas! by anticipation, the saintly resignation with which she long supported, and then sunk under, the most painful of human maladies. Of this noble specimen of womanhood, whom it was never the privilege of the writer to behold, the following reminiscences, kindly volunteered by one well qualified to judge, may give a faint idea.

"Her countenance," says this surviving witness, "was open and animated; expressive, in a high degree,

* Sir Robert, it will be shortly seen, speaks of her as one "who has felt much grief, but never raised a painful sigh in the breast of a fellow-mortal."

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of candour and benevolence. It was impossible to hear her conversation without at once perceiving a cultivated mind and great energy of thought. She had a flow of elegant language, which left no impression of provincial dialect, but such as would have commanded attention in any society or any age. It was impossible to leave her presence without the most enthusiastic emotions of gratitude; and her conversation was peculiarly adapted to kindle in a youthful mind the warmest sentiments of benevolence and virtue. Her dress was plain, and in the fashion of former times. Her manner was courteous and dignified; so that you at once imagined her to belong to some superior order of beings, far above the trammels of fashion, or the ordinary routine of local society. The writer of this, at the close of more than half a century, looks back with unabated feelings on the impressions he received in his interview with this excellent person." If such was the effect produced, and on a stranger, by *one interview*, how charming must have been the influence in domestic life of the being thus feelingly described?

Nor was the "sister Jannie" of the following letters less amply endowed by Nature with the talent for which the family had showed itself remarkable; though cast in a somewhat sterner mould, and early withdrawn from the world at large, and ultimately even from the social circle, by an accident,* which, though prevented from proving fatal by the courageous energy of a gallant soldier, embittered, nevertheless, the remaining

* The clothes of this excellent woman having caught fire, it was the happiness of a comrade of her brother's in Germany (the Roby Hepburn, often fondly mentioned by him, afterwards colonel of the Enniskillen Dragoons) by wrapping her in the hearth-rug, to prolong her valuable life; though by the severe injury to her limbs, she was deprived of their use, and of the enjoyments of society.

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existence of the talented recluse. It was, however, no unprofitable seclusion to herself or others. From her chamber of suffering emanated many acts of beneficence; and its inmate has left a noble and undying monument in the bequest of the greater portion of her means to an endowment for *Incurables*, less fortunately circumstanced than herself.

Of the "sister Anne," the youngest of the family, the object of fond predilection to her father and brother, more will be said hereafter; and in the words of one more competent to do justice to her rare character.* What has been quoted already from the same pen, may for the present serve to prove, that she united, in a singular degree, the characteristics of a gifted family—her father's lofty dignity of mind, the benevolent urbanity of one sister, and the talent and quickness of another; with the wit and playfulness which tempered in her (as in himself) the unbending rectitude and high feeling of her brother. The following letter will be the best record of the feelings which gave it birth.

MISS ANNE KEITH TO SIR R. M. KEITH.†

Edinburgh, September 21st, 1774.

My dearest Brother,

I can find no form of words that will, in any degree, soften or prepare you for the dismal tidings I must impart. Our father! our excellent, our amiable father! is no more. He died this morning at two

* With the letter before alluded to, from Sir Walter Scott (written on her lamented death, and which it would be anticipating by nearly half a century to introduce here) it is proposed to wind up this fond record of a family, of whom it may perhaps without vanity be said, "that all the sons were brave, and all the daughters virtuous."

† This letter, and a few succeeding ones which (to bring to a termination the career of the venerable statesman to whom the preceding pages have

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o'clock. Such were the circumstances of his distemper, that it became our ardent prayer that he should not survive. His illness lasted but eleven days. On Saturday se'nnight we were called to him, at two in the morning. He was in a most dreadful asthma, which W— thought would have cut him off before the physicians could reach the house. He did everything for him in a moment, and in a few hours heat had begun to return. He was perfectly in his senses, but could hardly articulate a word; he attempted the word "dying," and seemed perfectly resigned, though in violent pain. When at last we could make out an expression, he bade *God bless us!* By little and little I could make out his meanings, and found he thought his illness paralytic, which indeed it was. Every remedy that friendship or skill could suggest was applied, and succeeded wonderfully. By next morning, he spoke amazingly well, and was in good spirits. He said that his head was clear, and he was willing to compound for the loss of a limb; the left leg was entirely numbed. I never saw him more distinct, or more *cheerful*, than he was all the week. He bade us write to you on Monday. I said I expected he was to be so much better by Friday, that I would delay it till then. "That will do," said he;* "remember to tell him that I suspect Ernest Harrach thinks him colder than usual; not that he says anything, but I think it is implied in his last," (I will transcribe the paragraph afterwards). When Friday

been dedicated) are here given, in anticipation of their date in the general narrative, was written when Sir R. M. Keith had replaced its subject at Vienna.

* There is something touchingly characteristic in the desire (at such a moment) of the veteran "*peace-maker*," to save an old Vienna friend from a possible (though unfounded) feeling of neglect, on the part of one incapable of deserving the imputation.

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came, he was so well and cheerful, that I was very willing to write to you, but he bade me let it alone till Monday, and he would make out his first scheme of writing a page in my letter. What a Monday it was!

The gleam of sunshine lasted till Saturday night. That evening he had a conversation with Nancy, enumerating all the good things of his life—his worthy parents—his genteel education—his angel of a wife—his comfort in his children—their honourable and easy situation—his own consciousness of good-will to all men—and the return of good-will he had met with; all these he dwelt upon with pleasure. "When I take all together," said he, "I am very tranquil with my poor leg lying like a log beside me." He continued in this blessed disposition till midnight, when I left him in a sweet soft slumber. The nurse and John tell us that he had two of these sweet sleeps before two o'clock on Sunday morning, when he awoke at once—raving! He could not make any articulate sound; but we saw the complaint was in his head, by his constantly putting up his hand. I imagined that in the first moment of the attack he had known that his head was struck: a thing he dreaded ten times worse than the worst of deaths. The people of skill, however, assure us that if he did know it at all, it could have been only for a moment. All that occurred between this and his death was a mixture of torpor and restlessness; a state from which I saw him relieved with much satisfaction. I do not know that I can ever have so severe a trial as the dread of his recovery, which hung over me for part of Monday, and I dwell on it that it may have the same effect with you as it has had with us all; it has convinced us that we might have suffered more upon his account than death makes us feel. Even poor aunt Barbara was glad to resign him.

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I look upon Sunday morning as the time his mind died, and again, I thank God that the poor shattered body followed. His sick nurse, his servants, everybody and everything pleased him while he was himself; and he died calm, and without one struggle. When I kissed his cold lips I said to myself, "Sweet are the slumbers of the just!" He recovered the very same placid countenance I had left him with on Saturday night.

My uncle is with us, and ordering everything with becoming decency. When I look round the house, the feeling is very bitter, to think how soon it has lost its master! at the same time, it has been a blessed house on this occasion, as we had every assistance for him in a moment. The recovery from the first attack was entirely owing to the prompt remedies applied; had we lost even minutes, we must have regretted it for ever. Our door has been crowded with friends, every hour of the day; no cold formal messages: people came themselves, and questioned the servants minutely. Had he been *first minister*, there could not have been more solicitude, and the *heart* was in all!

Farewell, my dear brother—my friend, my father now! Little did I think I was so soon to claim your protection in that light! God bless and comfort you, prays your

A. K.

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH TO MISS AGNES KEITH.

My dear Nancy,

I must have the comfort of writing a few lines to each of my sisters: not to exhort them to suppress their grief for the greatest of all losses, but to beseech them to rely with confidence upon every sort of alleviation which the most genuine friendship and affection in a brother can procure them through the longest period

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of life. Our family is strong indeed in those principles which parental virtue, and the fairest lessons of disinterested candour inspire and cherish. The little fortune we have, we have in common; and I am thankful that, in saying so, I shall be warranted by those feelings to which you have been witnesses since my infancy. There is not a child of that father and mother whom we have lost, who would not gladly share the last shilling with the others. You all know what I think, and what I wish; act for yourselves. You are sure of my approbation; but with one single compact—that we never separate—that our father's house hold us all for ever! You, my dear Nancy, will cheerfully dedicate your attention to the support and consolation of our father's sister: I could envy you the means of making her old age comfortable. She has felt much grief, who never raised a painful sigh in the breast of a fellow-creature! Embrace her in my name, and tell her I will never lose sight of that example her brother set before me. Adieu, my dear Nancy; let each of you tell me what you would have me to do, and I am sure I shall be happy in showing you how affectionately I am your friend and brother,

R. M. K.

MISS ANNE KEITH TO LORD SUFFOLK.*

My Lord,

Since the first moment of recollection after the shock of my father's death, which happened on Wednesday morning, I have had a desire to write to your Lordship on the subject. I am now convinced that it has been false delicacy which has withheld me hitherto.

* The then official principal, and deeply-attached personal friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

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There lies before me a letter from my brother Sir Robert, dated the 3rd of September, with everything in it that could have pleased and entertained his father.* The whole is summed up with a complaint of my brother Sir Basil's silence; "but," says he, "my *good Lord Suffolk* tells me he is perfectly recovered." This further proof that your Lordship enters into all that concerns your friend's family removes every doubt. I ought never to have had any, when I recollect the way in which my father spoke of your Lordship's kindnesses: civilities, he said, was too cold a word. All these kindnesses I can assure your Lordship were repaid by the warmth of his gratitude, both on his son's account and for that share of your personal friendship he himself enjoyed.

On the 10th of the month, my father was struck with palsy in a most violent and dangerous degree. Every help was instantly procured, and he recovered almost miraculously. His intellects were quite untouched; and though he wished to be released from the struggle between an excellent constitution and the most painful helplessness, he patiently submitted to the thoughts of living, when there was an appearance of recovery; happy that his mind was quite clear. When he found one side quite gone, instead of repining, he made an enumeration to us of all the blessings and comforts of his life, and then thanked God his mind was easy and tranquil. In the catalogue of his good things, the uncommon good fortune of his sons was not forgotten. He dwelt with pleasure and exultation on the favour of their sovereign, and the attachment of their friends and patrons; and hoped it was not partiality made him believe they would continue worthy of such a master

* It gave an account of his visit from Marshal Conway, and their joint expedition into Hungary.

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and such friends. This calm and cheerful resignation continued till Sunday morning, when a second more dreadful shock entirely destroyed that high and worthy mind, which had, for seventy-seven years, carried him with applause and heartfelt comfort, through all the vicissitudes of life. We thank God that he did not survive after the fatal blow. We see him lamented by all who knew him; we dwell on the idea of his being beyond the reach of pain or care; we have no regret left on his account; and we are endeavouring to conquer our feelings for ourselves in the loss of a most affectionate parent, and most amiable and instructive companion. We have done everything in our power to soften the blow to his sons, and to reconcile them to their irreparable loss.

And now that I have indulged myself by writing to your Lordship, I remain satisfied that I have omitted nothing that appears to me due to the memory of my blessed father, or the friendship which subsists between my brother and me.

I am, my Lord, with sincere respect, yours, &c.

ANNE KEITH.

THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY* TO SIR ALEXANDER DICK, BART.

Ambresbury, October 5th, 1774.

SIR,

I most heartily lament the loss of my worthy friend Mr. Keith, who was the oldest acquaintance

* The predecessor of the last eccentric Duke, and a most amiable man. What is said here, of the life-long friendships then formed by young men travelling for improvement, leads to a regret that it is no longer the invariable practice for the heirs of good families to make, under suitable guidance, the once indispensable *Grand Tour*. If occasionally perverted by a few *mauvais sujets*, the five hundred young Englishmen who, during twenty years, *did credit* to the patronage of Sir R. M. Keith, at Vienna, and subsequent honour to themselves and their country, show the former to have been *exceptions*.

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I had in the world, and one for whom I had the greatest esteem, and most affectionate regard. Our acquaintance began in our early days, when we were both young travellers abroad; and we lived in mutual uninterrupted friendship from that time to the hour of his death. The particulars attending that fatal hour, which you have acquainted me with, deeply affected me. But the reflection of his having died as he had lived, equally meritoriously, gave me a degree of melancholy satisfaction; and I hope it will be of some consolation to his family, whose welfare and prosperity I most heartily wish, not only in regard to my departed friend, but in respect to their own personal merit, which gave him great comfort while he lived, and will do honour to his memory. My wife most sincerely condoles with me upon this melancholy occasion, and joins her affectionate compliments with mine to the afflicted family.

I am with great regard, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

QUEENSBERRY.

THE EARL OF SUFFOLK * TO MISS ANNE KEITH.

Hampton Court, October 10th, 1774.

MADAM,

If I had not been extremely indisposed with the gout when I received the honour of your letter, I certainly should not have failed immediately returning

* Of that sensibility and delicacy of feeling, so often referred to in Sir R. Keith's correspondence, as characterising the writer of the above, and which must have endeared him inexpressibly to his intimate friends, a touching relic accidentally met the Editor's eye, in the valuable autograph collection of Wm. Hunter Baillie, Esq., son to the late eminent physician of that name. A letter from the Earl to the celebrated Dr. Hunter, on the death of the Countess, whom all the skill and tenderness

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my best thanks and acknowledgments for so flattering an instance of attention towards me. Permit me to employ the very first moments of my recovery, in assuring you of the sincere part I take in whatever concerns Sir Robert Keith's family. Few people seemed to enjoy more serenity and happiness at the close of life than your father; and none deserved it more. He lived to see his sons greatly provided for; to see the representative of his family rise by his own merit to very distinguished honours and situation; to see him high in the esteem and confidence of his royal master, and dear to all his friends and acquaintance; respected abroad and at home. Everything seemed to conspire to smooth the evening of Mr. Keith's life, and Providence would not let him linger in disease, or protract a miserable existence.

I presume, Madam, to offer my best compliments to your sisters, and am, with great respect,

Your most obedient and most obliged
Humble servant,
SUFFOLK.

SIR R. MURRAY KEITH TO SIR ALEXANDER DICK.*

Vienna, Jan. 19th, 1775.

The gratitude which I have owed to you, my dear uncle, from my earliest infancy, for numberless proofs of kindness and affection, is now redoubled by the parental care and tenderness which you have shown to

of that great physician had failed to save, is perhaps unrivalled in conveying, at an agonizing moment, the mingled sentiments of christian resignation, conjugal grief, and a gratitude, of which even the loss of a beloved object had only rendered the expressions more delicately fervent.

* Of this most amiable and patriotic man, a diplomatic friend of Sir

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my sisters in the distressful situation which has been the natural consequence of our late irreparable loss. They and I have inherited from your beloved sister, and from your deceased friend, our worthy father, such sentiments and feelings as will, I flatter myself, do no dishonour to their memories; nor leave any room to doubt that those excellent lessons which have been taught us by such parents, have made that deep impression which they so ardently wished in the minds of their children, and marked out to each of them an invariable line of principle and conduct. We are rich in what we think the treasures of this world, the good opinion of the public, and the warmest affections of private friendship. Of these riches we are both greedy and tenacious; and to our wants and wishes for every other species of wealth* your angel of a sister did happily set the narrowest bounds, with the first and strongest impressions of reason and example. My sisters have refused the small addition I was desirous to make to that income which they hold from the

R. M. Keith, who visited Scotland, says, "I was made particularly happy by the acquaintance of your amiable and accomplished sister; and was equally gratified and astonished with the *viridis et jucunda senectus* of the venerable Sir Alexander Dick. I have been so struck by the peculiar excellence which so strongly marks the whole race with which you are connected, that I cannot help exclaiming, '*Rara avis in terris.*'"

* Volumes, perhaps, could not more graphically convey the sentiment, as reflected from the mind of Mr. Keith to those of his family, than a little anecdote, for which the Editor is indebted to the venerable lady whose name has shed its friendly sanction over these pages:—One of Mr. Keith's daughters, while recounting to him an instance of unbecoming parsimony in a great personage, added a regret that those most richly endowed with the gifts of fortune were not always possessed of the generous and liberal heart which ought to accompany them. "Child!" exclaimed Mr. Keith, (or rather "Lassie," for the veteran diplomatist, when excited, was apt to relapse into the dialect of his youth,) "would ye give them *that too?*"

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bounty of our beneficent sovereign. They did so from motives which I cannot help approving; but they have not taught me—nor did they wish to have me suppose—that my purse (whatever it may contain) was less their's because at this moment they saw no necessity for putting their hands in it. Our father's children will always be in the right in matters of money, because we know what is its true value, and think it well bestowed whenever it can purchase one pleasing recollection, or a grain of self-esteem.

My most ardent wish at present, is to see my sisters in possession of that sacred sum which my father so properly bequeathed to them. I hate the word "Independence," and they shall never use it with my consent; but I shall think myself infinitely obliged to any friend of my father's who can so help them to clear up their affairs by the sale of the house and furniture (the books and pictures only excepted), that they may have their little pittance in their own hands, with the full power of bestowing it hereafter on that man, woman, or child who shall in the course of years have brought home to each of their hearts the greatest number of grateful sensations. I will be that heir, if I can, because I will employ every honest means to stand foremost in their affections; and yet I both acknowledge, and am proud of, my brother's right to the fairest rivalship in so good a cause. He shall bring nephews and nieces to us all, and I will entail upon them my romantic notions, with that fund of contentment which Providence has given me, in addition to the wealth of all my three sisters. *

As to myself, I grow every day somewhat older, and much poorer; my station and my fortune bear no

* The worthy use made of it by two of them (for the younger added to her immediate elder's beneficent bequest) has been already noticed.

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proportion; but this to me is no subject of repining, for my brother and sisters are well provided for, and I am at the height of my ambition; I am confident that in spending my last shilling I am doing what is right; and I am honest enough never to make away with one farthing which belongs to another.

But, to return to the interesting subject of your kind letter. In one of my last to my sisters, I have desired that a small but elegant monument of marble may be set up near the grave of the best of fathers. I am very desirous to see a drawing by Mr. Cumming, and a modest, yet manly inscription, penned by Dr. Robertson, Mr. Hume, Dr. Blair, or any one of my father's learned friends. I beg that a short estimate of the expense may be sent along with it to me, and my answer shall suffer no delay.

It gives me real pleasure to find that Lady Dick has set so high a value upon that token of grateful remembrance which my sisters delivered to her in my name. It could not be better bestowed than upon a woman whose many good qualities render you and your family so essentially happy. I beg of you to deliver my most affectionate compliments to them, and to Lady Dalrymple and her's. You know those friends in your neighbourhood who have an undoubted right to my sincere attachment, and you will do me a service in giving them the strongest assurances of its duration. Adieu, my dear uncle.

I ever am most affectionately your's,

R. M. KEITH.

It was beneath the roof, and from the example of the father thus mourned and commemorated, that his two sons imbibed the principles of kindred honour and inte-

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grity which through life so eminently distinguished them. And to the respect inspired by their parent's character they no doubt owed, in part at least, that singular good fortune, which ultimately triumphed over the usual difficulties attendant on the path of youthful adventurers in the fields of fame.

That this was the case, is evident from the tenor of the following private letter, in his own handwriting, from Mr. Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham) to Mr. Keith. And while the promise contained in it in favour of the elder brother was ere long gratifyingly fulfilled, the interest of that great minister placed the younger (the *beau idéal* of a frank gallant British sailor) in the path of that further promotion and employment which paved the way for his ultimate appointment (as a reward for his brother's distinguished services) to the government of Jamaica; an office which he discharged with general esteem and approbation for several years, at the end of which, on his lamented decease, in 1777, a monument was erected to him by the House of Assembly.*

MR. PITT TO MR. KEITH.†

St. James's-square, December 28th, 1758.

[*Private.*]

SIR,

I cannot let the despatch from the office go away without accompanying it with a line to assure you

* The work entitled "Batson's Political Register," after enumerating his services in the navy from his entrance into it till the year 1769, adds, "In 1772, he received the honour of knighthood, as proxy for his brother, Sir Robert Murray Keith, then Ambassador at the Court of Vienna. In the ensuing year he was raised to the very honourable and consequential trust of Governor of the Island of Jamaica.

† Then Ambassador at the Court of Vienna.

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of my sincere regard, and of the pleasure I should take in being of any use to Major Keith, on any proper occasion that shall present itself. You will have learned from Captain Keith himself the step his merit has given him in the navy, and I think myself much obliged to Lord Anson for doing, at my request, that *piece of justice* so readily. Continue, Sir, to do me the honour to believe me always at your service, and be assured of the real sentiments of esteem and consideration with which I remain,

Dear sir, your most obedient
and very humble servant,
W. Pitt.

That these were not mere words of ministerial courtesy, (albeit unwonted, even as such, from a dictator of proverbial haughtiness,) his creation, in the course of the following year, of a separate command for the military brother, and the appointment of the other to a 40-gun frigate, will be sufficient to prove. But though these might speak for themselves, it is difficult to resist the honourable testimony borne by the Premier's confidential secretary (when the time for this realization arrived) to the share which the individual worth of his *protégés* seem to have borne in the fulfilment of more than the most sanguine hopes of either.

MR. WOOD TO MR. KEITH.

Whitehall, July 7th, 1760.

Dear Sir,

According to all rules of civility I should have answered your obliging letter; but though I have delayed that, and omitted letting you know that both

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your sons had obtained what they wanted, yet the business being done (and done by Mr. Pitt alone), I was easy about the rest, and I know you 'll forgive me. There is no doubt you would soon hear this from others, who might perhaps claim a merit in being your friends upon this occasion; but it is right that you should know that Mr. Pitt did the business, both with Lord Anson and Lord Barrington; and it will not be amiss that I should tell you, that whatever partiality Mr. Pitt may have towards you, he would not have interfered, did he not know your sons deserved his attention. They really do—and while they continue to go on so, they will be remembered.* Mr. Pitt directs me to make his compliments to you. May you and your sons long have a perfect enjoyment of each other! I beg you will excuse this hasty letter, and believe me, with the greatest truth and regard,

Dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

ROBERT WOOD.

To the elder of these two sons, the ostensible subject of the present sketch, Sir Robert Murray Keith, it may be thought high time to revert. And it may serve incidentally to prove how reverential was the regard cherished in the family, for the name which its head so honourably bore, that the patronymic of "Robert" was successively bestowed on three sons; two of whom, dying in infancy, it was, in defiance of the superstitious feelings to which such a circumstance might have given

* A promise again fulfilled by the appointment of Sir Basil to a command on the West India Station, from the year 1766 to the end of 1769; when (in a letter to his sister) the warm-hearted tar owns he *wept* at parting with his officers, spite of the fine things said to him by the First Lord of the Admiralty.

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rise, perseveringly conferred on a third, who survived, it is hoped, not to disgrace it.

He was born on the 20th September, 1730. From the important avocations of his father abroad, the early formation of his character must have devolved, in a great measure, on the "angel" of a mother whom, at the age of eleven, it was his misfortune to lose;* and while to this may probably be traced the tenderness and delicacy of feeling which distinguished her son's character—its manlier features, and strong soldier bias, as well as that unsophisticated relish for fun and frolic, which neither age nor etiquette could quench, may have taken their rise from that epitome of the world, in its mixture of ranks, its struggles, and competitions, nay, even its not altogether *bloodless* conflicts †—the High School of Edinburgh, as graphically described by Sir Walter Scott.

At what precise time this "radical" seminary—(amid whose collisions, and despite whose equality, the distinc-

* Her brother, Sir John Cunninghame, in announcing her death, (the result of a protracted labour of three days,) says, "Death was no terror to her—she bore his approach like a heroine, and carried the smile of an *angel* on her countenance till the moment she expired. So died the woman of the most virtues and fewest faults I ever knew." Her bereaved husband thus expresses himself: "I think no man ever lost more in one person; the most amiable of wives, the most faithful of friends, the best of mothers. Indeed I never knew her equal in all the relations of life."

† These last, indeed, long known under the significant title of *bickers*, in which large stones played a well-nigh fatal part—were so incompatible with the stiff and expensive childish costume of the period, that the nobility and gentry of Scotland, (then, according to Sir Robert's surviving sister a parcel of "happy beggars"—placed by their sense of their own position above the paltry distinctions of wealth)—by an agreement among themselves resolved to clothe their belligerent scions in a sheet armour styled *ticking*, since reserved for the more peaceful purposes of slumber.

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tions of society seem nevertheless to have resumed their allotted place)—was exchanged for a higher and wider sphere of education, cannot now be ascertained. A letter, however, still extant, dated September, 1746, shows that the youth had ere then been removed to an academy in London, the detail of his pursuits at which proves that he was already designed for the army. "My present studies," he writes to his maternal uncle, Sir Alexander Dick, "are riding the great horse, fencing, French, fortification, music, and drawing;" some of the articles in the enumeration showing that elegant accomplishments were then deemed an essential part of a military education. That his classical studies (though here omitted) had not been neglected, his frequent playful quotations testify; as well as his being able, in the evening of life, to call to his aid Latin, as a colloquial language, in parts of Europe where it formed the only medium of intercourse. His facility indeed in the acquirement of languages was such, that not only did French (which he wrote and spoke like a native) serve him as a passport to the enjoyment of, as well as admission into the best foreign society, but with Dutch, German, and Italian he was perfectly conversant; and possessed besides a knowledge of several other dialects, (comprising what on one occasion he playfully called his "ten tongues,") with not one of which, however, could he make himself intelligible in remote districts of Hungary. It may serve as an encouragement to youths, (or rather to the relatives of such,) who show disinclination in early years for letter-writing, to have it under the hand of one of the most excellent and indefatigable of correspondents in after-life, that, at sixteen, he was both a "*bad scribe,*"—(though even then the assertion is belied by the bold character of the penmanship which, fifty years later, combined facility and ease

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with copper-plate-like accuracy)—and "*exceedingly lazy.*"

How soon the latter disqualification was exchanged for diligence as a letter-writer, we know not; but sundry "copies of verses," as they were then styled, in which the writer's playfulness sought vent, during the monotony of some years' service among the fens of Holland, in one of the then popular regiments, (composed chiefly of his countrymen,) known by the name of the "Scotch Dutch," have found their way into the collections of the day. They are of too local and juvenile a cast to justify their rescue from oblivion. One alone, a parody written on the supposed disastrous event, (viz., the reduction of the corps,) to whose fortunate occurrence, perhaps, the whole subsequent career of the disbanded "captain" might be legitimately traced, may be given, simply to show with what lightness of heart the first misfortune—and a serious one it then seemed—of the poor soldier's life was met and commemorated. To be *reduced* at two-and-twenty, and deprived of his commission in one service, without any very definite prospect of employment in another, would have damped the spirits perhaps of any one but a Keith. The effusion is entitled—

A PARAPHRASE ON COLIN'S COMPLAINT; WRITTEN AT BERGEN-OP-ZOOM, MARCH, 1752, ON THE REDUCTION THAT THEN HAPPENED.

By the side of the slow-running Zoom
A poor pension'd Captain was laid,
And while he bewail'd his sad doom
A knapsack supported his head.

The Lieutenants who heard him complain,
With a sigh to his sighs did reply;
And the Ensigns, who shared in his pain,
Stood mournfully murmuring by.

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Alas! what a fool have I been
(Then sadly complaining he said)
To have changed my old yellow for green—
'Twere better by far I had staid.*

But I was ambitious and young,
And the name of a "Captain" seem'd great,
Nor did I repent it was done
Till now, when I find 'tis too late.

How foolish was I to believe
That reduction would do me no wrong;
Or that I should have a reprieve,
Because I had flugel'd † so long!

Poor I, who till now was so gay,
Must soon from that station remove;
Go, clothed like a ploughman, in grey,
Or live in a cottage on love.

What though I have skill to complain,
Though the Muses my temples have crown'd;
What though, when they hear my soft strain,
The Subs sit all weeping around!

Ah, Captain! thy hopes are in vain!
Thy sash and thy gorget resign;
Thy spontoon thou must yield to a swain
Whose regiment is older than thine.

All ye, my companions so dear,
Who share in those hardships of mine
Whatever you suffer forbear,
Forbear at your fate to repine;

Our masters have sent us to range,
The wants of the state to supply;
'Twas their's to complete the great change,
'Tis our's to be pension'd—and die!

How long it was before the commission in the English service, alluded to in the following letter was obtained,

* Alluding to a change for promotion from an older to a junior battalion.

† The leader in the exercises of a company, or squad, is styled, in military phrase, a "flugel man."

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is unknown. But much of the writer's subsequent distinction, and of the fitness of the reduced captain of the Scotch Dutch, for a separate command under one of the first generals in the age, may be traceable to the employment of the interval in a sedulous cultivation of military science, in one of those German schools of the art of war, where its knowledge was to be purchased by a course of privations and hardships, of which the soldiers of our day have little idea. A family tradition has preserved, that during the rigours of winter, in the garrison, where the future Colonel of "Keith's Highlanders" was serving his painful though voluntary apprenticeship, the scarcity of fuel, and necessity for mounting guard over the scanty supply of firewood, his shivering comrades were in the habit of pilfering from each other, induced, in the young Scotchman, a habit of somnambulism, which was first detected in consequence of the unaccountably hacked condition of his sword, with which he in his sleep belaboured imaginary robbers.

His situation is thus described in a letter to his eldest sister, dated from London, in March, 1758.

My dear Jannie,

Since I received yours, I have been in a sort of hurry, running after those who I knew were my father's friends, and might be of use to me. They have received me kindly, and several of those in power have assured me, that his Majesty intended to advance me, in consideration of my father's services, which have given entire satisfaction.

I should be sorry to begin by complaining of my present situation, though it is by no means advantageous; as I find myself the youngest supernumerary captain of

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a new battalion, without a company; which, after having been eleven years a captain, and a month a major, is no very flattering prospect. If there were any hopes of my father's succeeding in his present negotiation, we should certainly feel the good effects of it; if he does not, it will not be his fault, and we must take patience.

It is very natural for you to be curious about every thing that concerns him;* only in answer to your questions on the subject, I scarce know how to begin. His outward appearance is as much that of a genteel, unaffected man of the world as it is possible. His conversation is gay and unrestrained; which, added to the known probity of his character, has gained him an universal esteem. His modesty with regard to himself and his family has perhaps been a hurt to him, yet it is not the least amiable of his qualities, and gives him an air of gentlemanly independence, which no intriguing favour-begging courtier ever attained to. In short, he is the creature of nobody; and whatever he has got, has been by merit, and attention to business. If ever he thinks fit to ask an essential favour, I believe he will find it no hard matter to obtain it, at least as long as his Majesty lives; how he stands with the Prince I know not. I shall only add that he *walks* as much as ever; and, thank God! his constitution is not the least broken; though I cannot help being uneasy at the abominable climate he is gone to.†

Yours, affectionately,

R. M. KEITH.

* Mr. Keith had been for several years a stranger to his family, probably from the period of his appointment to Vienna, in 1748. It is probable that during his son's late sojourn in Germany, his father and he had met.

† Mr. Keith had recently been transferred (in consequence of the rupture with Austria) to the Embassy at Petersburgh.

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The prognostic above hazarded was not long in being realized. In the month of December of the same year, we find Captain Keith, after an active campaign under the celebrated Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, filling important though temporary situations in the allied armies. The letter is such a playful one; its *mélange* of doggrel rhyme, and more serious verse, so characteristic, that at the risk of the imputation of trifling on the threshold of graver matters, we cannot resist it. It runs thus :—

Munster, Dec. 8th, 1758.

DEAR JANNIE,

Having sheathed the sword for a space, and finding myself somewhat idle, I have resolved, for my own amusement and your instruction, to give Pegasus the bridle; and though there is nothing that inspires very lively ideas in this dull town of Munster, yet you know a man has many resources, who is at once a poet and a punster; for lyric, satiric, and soft panegyric, ode, opera, and sonnet, the buskin or bonnet, though each has a style that's unlike to the other, yet all are combined in the style of your brother. So, when to cheer the low and drooping soul, a skilful hand prepares the genial bowl, in just proportion rum and water pours, with sugar sweetens, and with lemon sours; though tastes so different seem to be at odds, yet joined in punch make nectar for the gods! Behold how this description borrows strength from apt similitude.

Dec. 15th.

Thus far had my muse proceeded, with uncommon success and agility, when a stupid, thick-skulled enemy to genius interrupted my career; nor has it been in my power to resume till now, for the following reasons.

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My last letter informed you that we expected impatiently the arrival of a courier from England. He arrived three days ago, and brought me the unwelcome tidings that my honest general was appointed to command the British troops here at Munster, during the absence of Lord George Sackville, who is gone over about business. As both my duty and inclination engage me to him, I was obliged to lay aside all thoughts of seeing Caledonia this winter, which had been my favourite scheme. However, that I might not remain without occupation, I am honoured with the double employment, of adjutant-general, and secretary to the commander-in-chief; that is to say, till those gentlemen return; for my good fortune will never allow me to be in effect one or other. In order to show the great folks that I was proof against disappointment, and that the prospect of so much business did not depress, but rather animate my genius, I presented them next day with the following verses, the subject of which is an inexhaustible fund of panegyric.

LINES ON PRINCE FERDINAND OF BRUNSWICK.

No more shall Fiction lend her aid to Truth,
And fabled heroes teach aspiring youth;
In Ferdinand's example they shall find
Lessons that mend the heart, and form the mind.
Behold him, glorious in the conquer'd field;
George's avenger and his country's shield;
Humanity and Justice by his side,
And the loud voice of Liberty his guide:
Then mark that soul which sparkles in his eye,
And learn for her to conquer or to die.
But when again the winter storms descend,
And the rude blasts the active war suspend,
See him, in social life, by all beloved,
And truly blest—in being self-approved.

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> Free with a few, and easy in the crowd,
> Too great, too wise, too worthy to be proud;
> The joys his bosom feels, and virtues give,
> Teach with what pleasure honest men may live.

Again it appeared as if (born under a lucky star) the seemingly adverse circumstances of Major Keith's career were destined, like successive waves, to float him on the "tide that leads to fortune." The disappointment above mentioned, in his projects of spending the winter at home, not only afforded him an opportunity of gaining experience and manifesting merit in the various military employments enumerated in his letter, but secured to him the inestimable advantage of the life-long friendship of Marshal Conway: the "honest general" (and well might he be thus honourably commemorated), to whom duty and inclination equally prompted a kindred spirit to adhere. With him, and his amiable wife Lady Aylesbury, even the "dull town of Munster" must have acquired charms; nor was Major Keith likely to repine at a detention which domesticated him in such society.

But stranger still, the disgrace and ruin which (well or ill deserved) fell, after the battle of Minden, on another commander, with whom his fortunes seem to have become at that period connected, were so far from involving in them (as at a period of such factious virulence might easily have happened), the innocent subordinate, selected for a very invidious and hazardous office—that this very undesirable selection, actually placed the young soldier in circumstances to claim in person the unforgotten promise of the Prime Minister of England. That he did not do so in vain, the following letter will show.

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MAJOR KEITH TO HIS FATHER.

London, August 21st, 1759.

DEAR FATHER,

Soon after I wrote to you from the battle-field of Tonnenhausen, the unhappy censure passed upon Lord G. Sackville, which has doubtless reached your ears, and which I hope was unmerited as well as unexpected, obliged his lordship to desire to be recalled from the command in Germany. I shall not enter at present into the merits of an affair, the greatest part of which I was not witness to, as I happened to be differently employed at the time. However, I was chosen to be the bearer of his resignation, which I accordingly delivered, and it was accepted.

I am, I hope, incapable of abandoning a man because he is the victim of popular clamour; but after having discharged my duty to him, and knowing that I could be no longer upon the staff, or on actual service, I thought myself bound to wait upon your friends, and declare my resolution of serving in any place and without any terms. I received the kindest, and perhaps the most ineffectual assurances from those to whom I was admitted; but some days after, I got access to Mr. Pitt, who inquired into my situation with a generous and friendly concern. He said he wished your family well, and would serve me whenever it was in his power. Soon after it was determined, though not without some opposition, to form a little corps of Highlanders and send them to Germany. Three hundred supernumeraries of Lord J. Murray's corps were ready at Newcastle. Mr. Pitt *removed all obstacles*, and gave me the sole command of them. This corps is to be augmented to five companies and to belong entirely to me, with the

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rank of Major-Commandant. I kissed hands to-day; am to embark the three first companies, as soon as possible, for Embden. They are to be in Highland dress, and be called the Highland Volunteers.

The happiness I felt in so distinguished a mark of favour, was increased by the manner in which it was bestowed upon me. Mr. Wood has acted throughout with warmth and affection; and he this day told me he thought it fair to acquaint you, that you have a right to call upon your other friends upon a proper occasion, as no person can pretend to the smallest share in this, except Mr. Pitt.

I will not say what I can do, but I have an excellent opportunity, and am unworthy of favour if I cannot improve it. My command is entirely separate, and only under Prince Ferdinand and Lord Granby. I shall probably be with the army in Germany before I can hear from you, therefore please direct for me there. Basil was so good as to come from Deal to see me. He is a noble-spirited gentlemanly young man as ever I saw. Mr. Pitt will, I am sure, continue his good offices to my brother, whose character he is pleased to approve of. I need not say he deserves your thanks.

I am, dear Father,

Your dutiful son,

R. M. K.

Having given, in his own simple and manly narrative, the account of an appointment, so gratifying in its mode and nature to every feeling of the gallant soldier, it is to other sources we must look for his exploits, and those of the countrymen whom he led into the field.

"It was," says General Stewart of Garth, in his admirable history of the Highland Regiments, in which he has embodied the substance of all the voluminous

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despatches and records of the time, "from among these Highlanders of the old school that two regiments, commanded by Major Robert Murray Keith and Major J. Campbell, of Dunoon, were formed. Major Keith had served in the Scots Brigade in Holland, and after the death of his illustrious relative Field-Marshal Keith, at the battle of Hoch-Kirken in 1758, had returned to England, when he was appointed to command three newly-raised companies of Highlanders, consisting of 105 men each. With this small corps he joined the allied army in Germany under Prince Ferdinand, in August, 1759.

"The opinion early formed of this corps may be estimated from the circumstance of their having been ordered to attack the enemy the *third day* after they arrived in the camp of the allies. In what manner this duty was executed, may be learned from the following statement:—

"'The Highlanders under Major Keith, supported by the hussars of Luchner, who commanded the whole detachment, attacked the village of Eyback, sword in hand, where Baron Fremont's regiment of dragoons were posted, and routed them with great slaughter. The greater part of the regiment was killed and many prisoners taken, together with 200 horses and all their baggage. The Highlanders distinguished themselves greatly by their intrepidity, which was the more remarkable, as they were no other than raw recruits just arrived from their own country, and altogether unacquainted with regular discipline.

"'By the advice of Prince Ferdinand, founded on a favourable opinion of the conduct of this little corps, orders were given to augment it to eight hundred men, with officers in proportion, and at the same time to raise another regiment in the Highlands, both of which

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were to be placed under the command of his Royal Highness. When the men had marched down from the Highlands, Keith's regiment was embodied at Perth, and Campbell's at Stirling. They were embarked for Germany, and joined the allied army under Prince Ferdinand, in 1760.* Though they had but little time for discipline, and none for experience, they were placed in the grenadier brigade—a distinguished honour for so young a corps.'

"The campaign having opened on the 29th July, 1760, the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick marched from the camp at Kelle with a body of troops, including the two battalions of English Grenadiers and two of Highlanders; and on the 30th, in a smart action, defeated the enemy with considerable loss. The Prince, in writing to George the Second an account of the battle, after stating the loss of the enemy at 1500 men, and more than an equal number of prisoners, adds—'ours, which was moderate, fell chiefly on Maxwell's brave battalion of English Grenadiers, and the two regiments of Scots Highlanders, *which did wonders.*'"

On a subsequent occasion—that of a night-attack on a fortress—he says: "The Scots Highlanders mounted the breaches, sword in hand, supported by the chasseurs. The service was *complete*, and the troops displayed equal courage, soldier-like conduct, and activity." Another account says: "The brigade formed of Grenadiers and Highlanders distinguished themselves remarkably on this occasion."

The brigade having been ordered, on the 5th of October, 1760, to join the Hereditary Prince, arrived

* It was to this consummation of Major (now Colonel) Keith's hopes, and *not* to the first appointment, that Mr. Wood referred, when he said to Mr. Keith, his son had (through Mr. Pitt again) *got all that he wanted.*

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on the 14th at a very critical moment, when the allied army, having been attacked by Marshal de Castries, were compelled to retire. The Prince having been joined by the above, and other troops, determined to attack the marshal in his turn. The action was well sustained from five till nine in the morning, when the Prince gave the signal for retreat. The Highlanders, it is said by various contemporary authorities, were the "*first to attack, and the last to retreat,* and kept their ground in the face of every disadvantage, even after the troops on their right and left had retired. The Highlanders were so exasperated by the loss they sustained, that it was with difficulty they could be withdrawn, till an aide de camp was sent from the Prince to say, that longer persistence would be an useless waste of human life."

"In the battle of Fellinghausen, in July, 1761, the conduct of the Highlanders (who had now acquired the character of veteran soldiers) was again honoured by a flattering mark of approbation by the commander-in-chief. 'His Serene Highness Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick has been graciously pleased to signify his entire approbation of their conduct on the 15th and 16th of July. The soldier-like perseverance of the Highland regiments in resisting and repulsing the repeated attacks of the *chosen troops of France,* has deservedly gained them the highest honour. The intrepidity of the little band of Highlanders merits the highest praise.' He adds—'The humanity and generosity with which the soldiers treated the great flock of prisoners they took, does them as much honour as their subduing the enemy.'"

To these contemporary testimonies, collected with honest pride in the reputation of his countrymen by General Stewart, it is gratifying to be able to subjoin

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the letter written almost from the field of battle—where, indeed, the *chosen troops* of France, under their most distinguished commanders, had sustained a memorable defeat—by the commandant of the brave little band who had so materially contributed to the victory.

COLONEL KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

Camp, at Kirchdenckern, July 19th, 1761.

My dear Father,

The last week has been a very busy one, and the half-naked gentry have not been idle. On the 12th instant, the enemy attacked the posts in front of our army, and my battalion, *being at hand*, was employed in repulsing them. This we had the happiness to effect, but it cost my *little family* one captain killed, one captain and two subalterns wounded; and in all, between forty and fifty privates. On the 15th, the French made dispositions for a general engagement; Marshal Broglio being to attack Lord Granby's corps, which is upon the left of the army, while Prince Soubize attacked the Hereditary Prince upon the right, and the Prince de Condé the centre. On the evening of the 15th, Broglio, with a large corps endeavoured to turn our left, but was repulsed in several attacks with great loss. The two battalions of Highlanders *were there*, and suffered considerably. My poor major, Campbell, was killed dead, and one subaltern; and I had one captain and one subaltern wounded.

The next day, 16th, Broglio began to engage our left about four in the morning; but after many fruitless attempts (the detail of which I shall not pretend to give) he was forced to retire in the greatest confusion. Six pair of colours, nine pieces of cannon, and above

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1500 prisoners was taken in the pursuit, The loss of the French in all may amount to 5000; that of the allies I am not certain of, but I should imagine it does not exceed 1200.

All our generals are unhurt, and all your acquaintance safe. Duke Ferdinand was pleased to honour the brigade I belong to with his particular thanks for their behaviour, and as a further mark of his approbation of the Highlanders, he deigned to *embrace your son* in presence of all the general officers, which favour he accompanied with the most flattering expressions of regard for the brave little bodies.

While the action lasted on the left, M. de Soubize manœuvred his whole body in front of the Hereditary Prince; but never came to a close engagement. Perhaps his attack depended on the success of those upon the left; however, he retired at the same time with Mons. de Broglio, and without suffering any considerable loss. They have made a retrograde march, and we are at present quiet.

I am every day more obliged to Lord Granby's goodness. He desires to be remembered to you, as do Generals Waldegrave, Townshend, and Douglas, and Roby Hepburn. Excuse the incoherence of the above narrative. You will soon have a more distinct account of the action; which takes its name from the village of Fellinghausen, in which I now am.

Dear Father,

Your dutiful and affectionate son,

R. M. K.

On the news of this victory, eclipsed as it has since been by actions of gigantic magnitude and importance, public thanksgivings were ordered in the churches of

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London. And Walpole thus writes:—"We have been pretty well accustomed to victories of late, and yet the last is as much as we know how to bear decently. It seals all our other conquests. The King may be crowned at Aix la Chapelle, like Charlemagne, if he pleases. Of all our glories, none ever gave me such joy as this last. Mr. Conway is with Prince Ferdinand, and safe; indeed everybody you know, is. We lost but one officer of rank, Lieutenant-Colonel Keith;* and two wounded; a Lieutenant-Colonel Marlay, and Captain Harry Townshend. No particulars are yet come."

In June 1762, these corps formed part of the troops under Prince Ferdinand, in the successful attack on the French army, under the command of Marshals D'Estrèes and Soubize, at Graïbenstein. The victory was in itself so complete, and attained with so little loss, that it appeared rather the result of a surprise than a regular engagement. The loss of the enemy, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, amounted to upwards of 4000 men, including 200 officers;† while that of the allies did not exceed 700 men. "The British Guards, Grenadiers, and *Highlanders*, under the command of the Marquis of Granby, behaved with a bravery *not to be paralleled*; especially our Grenadiers and Highlanders. They behaved nobly, and took as many prisoners as they had men.

* Happily a mistake, occasioned by the precipitation with which the account was despatched. It was (as has been seen by Colonel Keith's letter) his *major*, Campbell, who was unfortunately killed.

† This peculiarity seems not confined to the engagement last mentioned. After the former (that of Fellinghausen) a letter from the armies contained the following "tragedy" (as it too truly styles it), from the mouth of a French officer. "Of the two lieutenant-generals killed (Rougé himself told me) the Duc de Havre, his father-in-law, was one, and his uncle another; two brothers, lieutenant-colonels, killed by the same shot —himself, and *his whole regiment, prisoners.*"

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"After every engagement some mark of favour was conferred on the two corps. But while Prince Ferdinand was preparing to lay siege to Zegenchayn, a conclusion was put to all further hostilities by the signature of the preliminaries of peace. This took place on the 15th of November, 1762, and thus ended three campaigns, highly honourable to the courage and character of the British army; which, as it was uniformly placed in the post of danger, obtained a high degree of celebrity. Of this reputation the little band of Highlanders earned their full share. Having been placed in the same brigade with the Grenadiers, and opposed to the *élite* of the enemy's troops, over which they were uniformly victorious, their military character was accordingly well established."

After this, the two regiments were ordered home; and, on their march through Holland, were received in various towns with acclamations; the women presenting laurel leaves to the soldiers, and even the children attempting to imitate their garb and broadswords. Some said that these demonstrations arose from the respect with which they and their broadswords had inspired the common enemy; while others attributed the kind feeling to the friendship and intimacy which had subsisted between the Dutch, and the soldiers of the Scottish brigade, so long established in Holland. Whatever may be the cause, the reception was equally honourable to both parties.

The regiments, on landing at Tilbury Fort, were marched to Scotland. Though hospitably received in all the towns through which they passed, their reception at Derby was the most remarkable. No payment was taken from them for quarters, and subscriptions were raised to give gratuities to the men. For this cordial reception, here, as in Holland, different reasons were

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assigned. While some asserted that the whole was done as a testimony of respect for military gallantry, and the services they had performed for their country; some alleged that it originated in other and more peculiar motives. The Highlanders it was alleged, were supposed to be Jacobites, as many in the north-western provinces then still were,—and the people remembered with gratitude, that the rebels had conducted themselves with unexampled propriety at Derby; and had respected the persons and property of the inhabitants. Nor was it forgotten, that, though in open insurrection, and in situations where the greatest turbulence and licentiousness were to be expected, nothing of the kind had occurred; and that no ill usage or insult had been offered by those men, who, (as a gentleman of Derby writing at the time to a friend, remarked) "said grace with great seeming devotion, before and after meals—*like any Christian!*"

If such was the light in which they were regarded by their fellow-countrymen in Britain, it may prove not less amusing to quote a curious article from the Vienna Gazette; giving some idea of the feelings excited by the sight of the Scottish mountaineers, in their native garb, and the opinions entertained of them among our German allies. It runs thus:—

"The Scotch Highlanders are a people totally different in their dress, manners and temper, from the other inhabitants of Britain. They are *caught from the mountains when young*, and still run with a surprising degree of swiftness. As they are strangers to fear, they make very good soldiers, when disciplined. The men are of low stature, and most of them old, or very young.

"They discover an extraordinary submission and

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love for their officers, who are all young and handsome. From the goodness of their dispositions in every thing, for the boors are much better treated by *these savages* than by the polished French and English,* (which, by-the-bye, shows the rectitude of human nature before it is vitiated by example and prejudice,) it is to be hoped their King's laudable, though late, endeavours to *civilise and instruct them in the principles of Christianity*,† will meet with success! The French held them at first in great contempt, but they have met with them so often of late, and seen them in the front of so many battles, that they firmly believe there are twelve battalions of them in the army, instead of two. Monsieur Broglio himself has lately said, that he once wished he were a man of six feet high, but that now he is reconciled to his size, since he has seen the wonders performed by the little mountaineers. He might well say so!"

On the reduction (which it is scarce possible to avoid regretting), in July, 1763, of the brave band over which he had so long presided, and which we have seen he touchingly styles "his little family," the feelings of Colonel Keith must have been akin to those of his gallant brother, when a tear dimmed his eye on parting from his ship's company. He must, like Othello, have felt his "occupation gone;" and though little of the "pomp and circumstance" of war had attended the arduous struggles in which he had been engaged, there

* The conduct of the Highlanders, both in quarters and in the field, in 1816, as well as the opinion expressed of them by another great Captain of France, proves their national character to have little changed.

† "No trait in the character of these supposed *pagans* was more noticed in the army, than the respect paid by them to their chaplain, Mr. Macaulay; and the influence he possessed over their minds and actions. Many of the men, when they got into any little scrape, were more anxious to conceal it from the chaplain, than from the commanding-officer."

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was abundance of glory and of excitement to make "piping times of peace" distasteful and monotonous. How this monotony was beguiled, we have no data to ascertain; except that 1765 saw him in London, and consequently returned from the visit to Paris, where, in 1764, his father's illustrious correspondent, Marshal Münnich, represents him (equally to the honour of his quondam antagonists and his own) as experiencing a *brilliant reception.*

The father and son had here the gratification of meeting; and a letter from the latter to his favourite aunt, Lady Dalrymple, even while chiefly occupied with details of mutual friends, and pleasing accounts of the joint hospitalities they were sharing from public and private connexions, shows such an early and thorough appreciation of the hollowness, as well as dulness, of the courtly circles in which it was hereafter to be his lot to mingle, that it may account for the scanty share allotted to them in his familiar correspondence.

COLONEL KEITH TO LADY DALRYMPLE.*

London, March 5th, 1765.

DEAR AUNT,

I return you a thousand thanks for your kind letter, and for the excellent anecdote of your *courtly* friend. I have a whole budget for you of the same sort; and we shall compare notes at meeting with the greater satisfaction, that I can assure you we agree entirely in our thoughts upon that subject. I have of late had a nearer view of those unfortunate people than ever; and at the same time that I think many of them deserve contempt, I cannot help feeling some pity for them.

* Widow of Sir Robert Dalrymple, and mother to the Dowager Countess of Balcarres; and *twin-sister* to the mother of Sir R. Murray Keith.

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They are so completely miserable, so unable to taste present enjoyments, and so ardently anxious after distant objects; so cordial in their hatred to one another, and so fatally deprived of all hope of friendship; that one should imagine their example would deter others from imitating them. But I grow sententious, and am consequently in danger of relapsing into dulness. When I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I hope may be soon, I hope to convince you that though I I have had one severe fit of that distemper, it has not yet become habitual, or changed my constitution in the least. I assure you I am to all intents and purposes the old man you have ever known me; though, I own some of my best qualities are in danger of lying dormant, while I remain here. I hate wisdom and importance; everybody here affects one or other; but I hope to be able soon to give a loose to my own natural insignificance. Meantime, dear Madam, I am in every mood, and for every possible reason, most sincerely and affectionately yours,

R. M. K.

In a letter of the same date to his sister, he thus playfully alludes to his own and his brother's uncertain prospects:—

"You will perhaps be inquisitive to know what are the prospects of certain young gentlemen, who came here in search of employment? Why, truly, these heroes are as yet totally in the dark as to that matter: however, time will show all, and 'tis at least a comfort to have tried to do what was right."

The "pleasure and pride" expressed by Mr. Pitt (in a note dated 9th June of this year) in having a "*share*

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in doing justice to distinguished merit"—must have referred to the procuring of rank in the British regular army for Colonel Keith; as in a letter bearing the date of 1769, he is styled "late Commandant of the 87th Foot;" a regiment probably involved in a subsequent reduction, as the epithet of "late" is soon after applied to it, as well as to its commander.

It is probable that this second loss of occupation in the military line, the avowed patronage of the great minister above quoted, as well as his own knowledge of the affairs of Germany, and acquaintance with its language and that of France, may have conspired to turn the thoughts of the son of so able a diplomatist towards his father's profession; and to point him out to that father's many surviving political friends, as a worthy successor to the paternal vocation. Be this as it may, his appointment as Envoy to the Court of Saxony took place in 1769; and the regrets expressed by the *élite* of the society of England, at the loss of his company, show that the interval had not been unprofitably spent, in cultivating the unalienable good-will and affection of a large circle of friends.

The *côterie* in which Sir Robert (then Colonel Keith), during his sojourn in England, chiefly mingled, was a band of gentlemen, who, under the rather equivocal, but then fashionable title of the "*Gang*," are constantly alluded to in the following correspondence, in which some of its members will be found bearing a principal part. Though styled a Club, it differed from those both of its own day and ours, in its very small number (limited to twelve), and its being a mere voluntary association, cemented by private friendship, and congeniality of disposition.

It consisted originally of Lord Frederick Campbell (brother to the Duke of Argyle, and Lord Registrar of

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Scotland), Mr. Bradshaw (Treasurer of the Navy, and afterwards one of the Lords of the Admiralty), Mr. Rigby (Paymaster of the Forces), Mr. Chamier (Under-Secretary of State), General Grosvenor (father of the venerable field-marshal of that name*), Mr. Cox (the well-known army agent), Mr. Harley, M.P., Mr. Bagot, and Sir Robert Murray Keith, with the several gentlemen at the head of the house of Drummond; who seem to have united, in a very enviable degree, undisputed pre-eminence in the financial world, high family connexions, and great political influence, with much enjoyment of rural pursuits, at their various country seats, in England and Scotland. The footing upon which this band of brothers lived, as well as the thirst for English news, and home intelligence, which continued unabated in Sir Robert Keith during his twenty years' expatriation (the *key*, indeed, perhaps, to that twenty years' correspondence), may be found in the following *jeu d'esprit*, still extant in the handwriting of his no doubt astonished secretary; and duly despatched to England, in a moment of indignation at the silence of his friends, shortly after his arrival in Saxony.

TO H. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Dresden, 1769.

SIR,

I am sorry to acquit myself of a very mournful duty, in acquainting you that his Excellency, Robert

* To whose kindness the Editor is indebted for the elegant engraved ticket by which its members were summoned to a monthly dinner:—A figure seated, embracing in one hand the symbol of fraternity, the fasces, and displaying in the other the mystic number, 12, surrounded by the goblet and other emblems of conviviality, chastened by that sobering memento, a skull. The device is surmounted by the words, "The Gang," and beneath is the following motto,

"Frui Paratis."

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Murray Keith, his Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary at this Court, late Commandant of the 87th Regiment of foot, Lord of the Manors of Murrayshall, Deans, Boghouse, &c., bade adieu to this transitory state, on the night of Wednesday last, immediately after the arrival of the English post, which contained nothing but a London Chronicle.

I had been alarmed, during these two months past, at the dejection of spirits which had often seized his Excellency; and particularly on post nights. I often heard him mutter some strange names, such as Bessy,* Tatty,† Ferry,‡ &c., &c., and on many occasions he even went so far as to wish them all at Old Nick (that was his Excellency's expression) together with a score of Drummonds, Campbells, and Mairs.

On the above-mentioned evening, he called me to his bed-side, and spoke to me in these terms:—"Mr. O'Carroll, how many friends do you think you have in the world?" "Sir," said I, "besides your Excellency, whose friendship does me honour, I am happy enough to believe I have three or four fast friends."

"You are a blockhead, Mr. O'Carroll," (said the Envoy with great warmth), "for believing any such thing. There is no such being existing as a true friend. I thought I had a dozen, male and female; but now I am convinced there is not one of them all would give a Soho ticket for my soul and body. Tuck me up, Master O'Carroll; bury me at your leisure, and let me give you this last bit of advice. Treat mankind like wolves and tigers; eat and drink, and be merry, if you can; and be sure you break the ten commandments every day of your life!"

* Lady Eliza Drummond, wife of H. Drummond, Esq.

† Mrs. Drummond, wife to Robert Drummond, Esq.

‡ Lady Frederick Campbell, widow of Earl Ferrers.

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These were the last words that great minister pronounced, and in repeating them, I am penetrated with the sense of the irreparable loss his family and country have sustained in him. My affliction is hardly to be expressed. It is, however, the only excuse I can allege for the trouble you now receive from, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. O'CARROLL.

P. S.—His Excellency has bequeathed £10,000 to the society called the "*Gang*," the interest of which sum is to be laid out in teaching the members of the said society, together with their wives and children, to read and write.

Some time previously to the date of this characteristic effusion, from the pen of one to whom (as his correspondence through life will prove) public news regarding the country he loved, and tidings of those dear to him there, were the "Elixir vitæ,"—"food and raiment," worth a "Jew's eye," and a "king's ransom," Sir R. M. Keith had arrived at his destination. A trip to Paris, where, as we have seen, he had on a previous occasion won golden opinions from the then acknowledged arbiters of taste, had preceded his entrance on his new functions; for the light and courtly duties of which he was as specially fitted by his natural urbanity and genteel accomplishments, as he was for the more arduous ones which succeeded them, by his business-talents, integrity, patriotism, and thorough knowledge of mankind.

How completely amid the *gêne* and etiquette of the former, he was "the old man" he styles himself in his letter to his aunt, unchilled by ceremonial, uninfected by "dulness," will be seen by extracts from a few

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familiar letters of this period which have been preserved. The little relish he felt for the stately accompaniments of his new vocation, and his retaining, amid them all, his home tastes and social predilections (a preference which accompanied him to the close of his diplomatic career), must have so endeared him to his English friends, that no man in Europe, it has been said by competent authorities, discharged these repugnant functions, either with a better grace, or more apparent and unvarying cheerfulness.

COLONEL KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Dresden, October 22nd, 1769.

DEAR ANNE,

I never received your letter from Bristol, nor the account of your adventure at the White Bear in Piccadilly.* Permit me to doubt a little of the great philosophy you pretend to have possessed, in being hurried through the great capital in the manner Sancho Panza was through the air upon the wooden horse. Maiden Misses have more curiosity; but, at the same time, I do justice to the goodness of your heart, which made you forget *self*, amidst the affliction of your friends. What an elegant society is now to be found at the Hermitage,† of no less than four ladies, all of whom have seen London and its wonders! What the deuce is the matter with your magistrates, proprietors, &c., that they don't set about repairing your bridge‡ immediately? The leaders of your metropolis have a rooted

* By some ludicrous mistake, Miss Anne Keith had been conveyed to that *plebeian* hostelry.

† The villa near Edinburgh, inhabited, on his retirement from office, by Mr. Keith.

‡ The bridge called the North Bridge, uniting the New and Old Town, on its first erection, had given way.

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aversion to elegance and ornament. There is not a Keith among you all, who is half so anxious about the New Town as I am; though it is more than probable I shall never be proprietor of a single stone within its extent. I wish you would build half as fast or as well as we do here; where near a thousand of the best houses were burnt down during the Prussian siege. I have a daily pleasure in seeing houses, churches, and squares, rising out of their ruins, and yet, when our town is finished, it won't be above twice as large as your infant city. But it is light, straight, white, tidy, and every single house has more ornament than a whole parish with you. It is the fault of the young women amongst you, that don't keep the men in better order; for as long as they are permitted to be slovens in their clothes and linen, it is impossible they should acquire the taste for elegant houses. I am soon to exchange my habitation, in which I have but *seven-and-twenty rooms*, for one where I can have more elbow room for self and *suite*.

Now I'm about it, I'll give you a little sketch of my way of living. Morning, *eight o'clock*:—Dish of coffee, half a basin of tea, *billets doux*, embroiderers, toymen, and tailors. *Ten*:—Business of Europe,—with a little music now and then, *pour égayer les affaires*. *Twelve*:—*Devoirs*, at one or other of the Courts (for we have three or four). From thence, to fine ladies, toilettes, and tender things. *Two*:—Dine in public,—three courses and a dessert; venture upon half a glass of *pure wine*, to exhilarate the spirits, without hurting the complexion. *Four*:—Rendezvous, sly visits, declarations, *éclaircissemens*, &c. &c. *Six*:—Politics, philosophy, and whist. *Seven*:—Opera, *appartement*, or private party. A world of business; jealousies, fears, poutings, &c. After settling all these jarring interests,

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play a single rubber at whist, *en attendant le souper*. *Ten*:—Pick the wing of a partridge, *propos galans*, scandal, and *petites chansons*. Crown the feast with a bumper of Burgundy from the fairest hand; and at twelve, steal away mysteriously,—*home to bed!*

There's a pretty lutestring kind of a life for you! and all (as you perceive) plainly within the verge of the ten commandments. And yet, would you believe it? I am such a vulgar dog at bottom, as to have dull, plodding matrimony ever running in my head. Reason me out of this folly, if you can; otherwise you must take the labouring oar in finding out the *phœnix* I have so long been in search of. I must and will be married, that's poz!—and I will have a British dame, that's pozer! —— —— would make a noble Dresden wife, and do honour to the embassy: but I suspect the little jade would turn the tables upon his Excellency, and that her four-and-twenty hours would be still busier than the above journal. No! I must have a sober, staid, sensible helpmate; five-and-twenty, at least. I laugh at beauty, and despise riches; but I positively insist upon romantic delicacy and the finest of feelings. My friend Lady Die will assist you in your search after this *paragon*. I am proud of her ladyship's partiality for me, and would have given the world to have known it at a proper season. Assure her, however, that I am not quite so great a puppy as I appear to be. So much for nonsense. In sober sadness, my great grievance in this world is Basil and his ragged fortunes.* Do plot, project, plan among you, and point out to me wherever I can put any iron in the fire to advantage. I have the comfort to think that

* Admiral (afterwards Sir Basil Keith), at this time unemployed; but whose "ragged fortunes" it was his brother's happy lot to raise by his own distinguished services.

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Basil is persuaded of my warm affection for him; and it must be hard indeed, if, among so many good heads, we cannot push one honest fellow happily through the world!

Yours ever,

R. M. KEITH.

It may heighten the good-natured reader's interest in the gallant sailor (so often and fondly mentioned in his brother's correspondence), to give one of the very few characteristic epistles preserved from his pen, written at this precise period of anxiety and loss of employment, and to some, perhaps, of despondence and distress. The writer had just returned from a West Indian station, where he had for some years commanded; and where the liberal and generous conduct, which probably caused his present embarrassment, had endeared him to the island* over which it was his future lot to preside.

ADMIRAL KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Parliament-street (not the White Bear),
Oct. 14th, 1769.

I received, my dear sister, both your letters, and you would have heard of me ere now, but that I may well liken myself to the attorney in Tom Jones. In short, what with the Admiralty office, Navy ditto, Victualling ditto, Ordnance ditto, &c. &c. &c. &c., I have been so hurried, that I have hardly had eating time; and all this not to get money, but to prevent mulcts, stoppages, &c.

Be persuaded I shall lose no time in this "dirty

* Jamaica, of which he became governor.

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metropolis," as your ladyship calls it (pray, do you write your adventures at the White Bear in Piccadilly?). You wanted to see London; you have, and spent your time in the best of company. Your observations on the manners of these polite people must be highly entertaining! *I* have neither money nor inclination to stay among them.

You cannot think how happy I am that father, aunts, sisters, the very *cats* at the Hermitage, are in perfect health and stomach. You must be my ambassadress (for I cannot enter into particulars) with all manner of kind things, in my name, to all my good friends. Kiss my bonny cousins,—men, women, and children,—all that desire it at my hands. I am in very good looks at present, so let them take care of their hearts. A little fat or so, but no matter, this face of mine improves in the wearing; so if it is given me to see four-score, I shall be a perfect beauty, a very comely old gentleman.

Have you any 'sonsy lass with siller' that would take me, eh?—As my poverty increases, my pride keeps pace with it, so that I shall not sell myself cheap. Tell the chits that. Seriously speaking, I don't know any man that has more matrimonial qualities than your *très humble serviteur*. Publish my intentions of honouring with my hand some female properly qualified for that happiness.

Meantime, I'm a poor half-pay, unshipped man. The Premier at the Admiralty, has said plenty of fine things to a certain lad you know; but the banker won't take that coin. I could weep at parting with my officers, not a bit at being paid-off. The Drummonds are the best of all possible friends; Lady Eliza the sweetest of women. Upon my soul it is not to be conceived the pure and disinterested friendship of that house!

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The Hermitage has ever my warmest love and affection. Adieu, dear spinster, and be assured that, whether on whole or half-pay, I am,

Your ever affectionate brother,

BASIL KEITH.

COLONEL KEITH TO HIS FATHER.

Dresden, Dec. 30th, 1769.

DEAR FATHER,

I rejoice to hear that your visit to the Duke of Athol's was attended with so many agreeable circumstances, and that you are safely returned to your hermits, and now keeping your holidays amongst your many friends, with cheerfulness and comfort. Long be it so, my dear sir, for all our sakes! On Christmas day I was engaged to dine with the Elector, but in the evening we drank your's and Lady Dal's health in my small society, and Frank did the honours of the pies and punch to his fellow-servants, in a very jovial and handsome manner. We are now preparing to plague one another without mercy for three or four days, with visits of ceremony and stiff compliments. I am sure every man of sense should be disgusted with the new year for its nonsensical beginning. But there is no getting the better of custom; and this etiquette is part of the magna charta of all German Courts. The Electress Dowager begins to appear in public again, and her daughter-in-law is declared *enceinte*, to the great joy of the whole country. This will produce fine doings in the end of the carnival, as we expect the Electress Palatine to assist at the lying-in, and perhaps her husband, the Elector, after that ceremony is over. It is not improbable that the Elector of Trèves (who married his nephew), may choose also to christen his

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first child, and the young Electress's brother, the Duke of Deuxponts, will make one at the feast. You may easily imagine how much our capital will gain in being thus *Electrified!* Now to my own matters. We had a very wet summer, and no company in town. I have philosophised a good deal, and jaunted about now and then in the neighbourhood. I am almost the only person who loves walking in a country where every step would raise the admiration of a landscape-painter. People are surprised that a man in my situation should trudge about continually (without even a servant), especially as I am, without vanity, so elegantly provided in carriages. Your friend at the Hague has really done wonders in the chariot way; but so far from indulging in laziness in consequence, my long walks are become one of the standing jokes of the Court, and I have proposed to set up a penny post, and to be myself the carrier of all the letters.

Our French players have been discharged, from a very laudable principle of economy; though I am myself a loser by that retrenchment of expense. Our Italian comic Opera *corps* rehearsed this evening for the first time; and I think them much above the common run. *A propos*—I have a very extraordinary commission to give you, which I am afraid you will hardly be able to execute without the help of honest Jock R—— or some such Highland oracle. The Elector has more than once expressed a curiosity to see me in the dress of my quondam corps. I intend to surprise him with it at one of his reviews, in spring. But to be completely in order, I want a handsome *bonnet,* a pair or two of the finest knit *hose,* and a plaid of *my colours,* sewed and plaited on a waist belt. If to this you are so good as to add a *handsome* shoulder-belt and buckle, and the hilt of an *Andrew Ferrara,* I shall be enabled to show my nakedness to the best advantage.

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I have, within this month, had an inundation of English, who have nearly eaten me out of house and home. The nine-and-twentieth left me a week ago, and I have only one or two more to expect. I am equally convinced with you, that I am sowing in a thankless soil; but I owe it to the King, and to myself, to bring these gentlemen forward, and to make their stay here as agreeable as I can. I have not yet had the honour of presenting a single female of his Majesty's subjects; but my philosophy is more than proof against that disappointment. Lord Baltimore, with his ladies, will probably take up his residence for the winter. The Duke of Devonshire, with Mr. Fitzherbert, &c., passed ten days here. I endeavoured, by the greatest attention to the Duke, to show my gratitude to General Conway. He is of a very cold disposition; but may turn out a very valuable man. I was glad to see that he was pleased with his reception here. They are most of them gone on to Berlin. A gentleman of that Court, *from whom you gave me copies of three letters,** has more than once expressed a desire to see me there, which I had some time since intended to communicate to my superiors; but my request for a month's leave I suppressed from the growing troubles in Poland. The invitation was communicated through Lord Marischal, who, on my letter, showed the greatest civilities to Mr. Solicitor Dunning, and Col. Barré; and they owed to him their introduction to the monarch, which had been otherwise refused. His Lordship sent me, by Mr. Dunning, a cornelian, with his own little thin face upon it; I seal this letter with it.

Yours,

R. M. K.

* The King of Prussia. The letters have been already given.

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COLONEL KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Dresden, December 27th, 1769.

I certainly am a good-natured fat gentleman, and the forlorn state of an old bachelor has not yet soured my blood, else I would not accept of the flimsy excuse you make for not answering my letter sooner. What in the name of wonder can a withered Miss have to do half so important as to acknowledge the honour done her by a person *in the ministry?* If you are preparing a petition from Prestonpans * to overturn us, I have nothing to say; I only hope that you will find to yourself a husband amongst the heads of that ancient corporation. The illustrious line of the house of Clapperton, for example, might, with great propriety, light the candle of Hymen; and the alliance of such a high sounding name would add great lustre to the mission with which I am honoured. I can get you made a countess for less money than would buy you a gown; and if you have sense enough to do your part of the business, you shall be Countess of Clapperton by return of post. If you neglect this opening, you are an arrant blockhead, and I give you up.

I must now talk to you of the internal state of my family, which is indeed in a turmoil and combustion, not at all unlike that of a half petitioning borough, though from very different causes. I have in the house twelve men, and three women only. Now the twelve gentlemen are all, more or less, *inamorati* of the three ladies, and have (or think they have) individually reason to be jealous. In the meantime, there are such bicker-

* A little village, not very distant from Lady Dalrymple's (his aunt's) residence.

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ings and peltings, that the house is as hot as the fiery furnace. M. Barterman, formerly blacksmith, and now butler, has been so active in dealing out *devoirs* to the females, and fistycuffs to the males, that he is soon to make his parting bow, and the best of his way to Britain. *A propos* of servants, I must tell you an anecdote of Frank, which is not much to his honour. He met with a brother nigger in London who had changed services and countries, with all the light-headedness of his countrymen. He is now in Denmark, and wrote to Squire Francis, with a fine project of lace, and fur, and turban, in Copenhagen. Frank first wavered, and then yielded. He begged my permission to visit the north, which I was in no humour to refuse. He accordingly laid off my sumptuous livery, and rigged himself out for the journey. I gave him an honourable discharge, and he howled a farewell. Next day, an Irish priest called Macnally, (a great friend of Robert More's* at Vienna) came to tell me that his eloquence had awakened the spirit of repentance and regeneration in the black soul of Francis. To be short, he wept a recantation, signed an engagement for three years to come, and received, with his pardon, the handsomest yellow robe in all Saxony. He had set his heart on a Persian robe, and fur lining; and being a very good servant, I could not deny him the satisfaction. Sir Thomas Wyffin, freeholder of the city of Bedford,† is by much the prettiest man, and the most intimate friend I have. *"Venus the God of Love, and Cubid his mother"* are making him look melancholy and gentle-manlike at present; but we shall soon hope to get him into flesh and spirits again. But I have another genius, of quite a different stamp, and this is *his* history.

* Mr. Keith's valet de chambre, while on that embassy.

† Colonel Keith's valet de chambre.

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Fifteen years ago, I met at Breda, or Bergen-op-Zoom, a mongrel Scots wine-merchant, of the name of Forbes. He kept a handsome public-house, and was in a fair way of making a fortune, by feeding Dutch subalterns. By some unlucky accident, he became bankrupt, and, in process of time, a lace merchant. He sold his laces to Dutch subalterns, and fortune again frowned upon him. He came to me in London, some years ago, without health or means. I had him set to rights in an hospital, and launched him once more into the world, with good shoes, and a few guineas. I heard no more of my friend Forbes, till I arrived within an hundred yards of the gate of Dresden; when behold, the honest man stopped my coach, and shaking me by the hand, told me he was tired of struggling with fortune, and that he had walked from Holland to give himself over to me for life! His speech admitted of no reply; and here he is, with a handsome suit of blue clothes, and a good wig; and a more decent bailie-looking man never walked the Cross of Edinburgh. He has the run of the house, and a ducat a month; and swears he never saw happier days. I have filled my paper with all this nonsense, but for want of better materials.

Yours most affectionately,

R. M. K.

COL. KEITH TO HARRY DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Dresden, January 3rd, 1770.

MY DEAR HARRY,

I wish from my heart that there were no such thing existing as a new year! The devil's in the people, I believe! I have been wished more joy within these three days, than can ever belong to the whole human race; and have tenderly embraced seven

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hundred people, men and women, whose faces I hardly know. 'Tis the worst farce that ever was played by human folly; and I love you and your's too well at all times and seasons, to plague you with a long rigmarole, because, forsooth, there are two figures changed in the date of my letter! I am upon the very point of setting out for Berlin *for a fortnight*, to see Sir Andrew Mitchell,* and Lord Marischal, who have long pressed me to make this journey. There are objects enough of curiosity in that great capital; but for my sins, there are no less than seven different Courts there, at all of which poor Keith must be presented, and take leave, in the space of ten days! It is a wise saying that one half of the world does not know how the other lives; and while you are getting money at the *Gang*, you little guess what I suffer in being bound 'prentice to Sir Clement Cotterell.

I suppose about this time all you Drummonds, Campbells, and wives and brats, are gathered together and stuffing your insides with chine and turkey. Oh if I could come among you, only for four-and-twenty hours, I think I could do a deal of business. I must whisper in your ear that I am the delight of all the Saxon dear creatures; and if I did not wax a *little* corpulent, I should be the prettiest fellow in the Holy Roman Empire.

COLONEL KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Dresden, February 25th, 1770.

DEAR ANNE,

My late journey to Berlin† was the only occasion of my delaying so long to answer Basil's letters: he has ere now got my full sheet, and I know

* The British minister, his father's friend and correspondent.

† The visit alluded to, to Earl Marischal, at the desire of the King of Prussia.

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he will do justice to my friendship and affection for him. You would give two of your teeth for a minute account of all I saw and heard and did at Berlin; but ministers should never unbosom themselves to Misses, and so you must rest contented. The man who hangs at the side of your parlour-fire,* is younger, handsomer, and livelier by far, than I had figured to myself. His conversation is keen and interesting, and his looks agreeable, when he is in a good humour. He said many kind things about the old hermit, and made it public *to the whole town* that he owed an essential obligation to that gentleman. Since my return here, Lord Marischal† has conveyed to me an invitation from him to make a second visit; but that must depend on circumstances, and cannot take place at least for some time.

His houses, shows, and streets are magnificent; but the new country-house‡ is a perfect *unique*. From the entrance to the garrets nothing is to be seen but gold and silver stuffs, inlaid floors, marquetterie, porphyry, and rock-crystal! Without, triumphal arches and colonnades, that beggar all description—at least such description as my time will permit me to bestow upon you at present. If we had a winter to pass together at Kilspindie, or some such castle, I have chat for you that would beguile the time most pleasantly. If Aunt Dal§ will repair an apartment at Tantallon,‖ I will retire with her there, and narrate without ceasing.

* The Great Frederick, whose correspondence with Mr. Keith has been given.

† Earl Marischal, the friend of Frederick, and brother to the great Marshal Keith.

‡ The palace of Potzdam.

§ Lady Dalrymple, widow of Sir R. Dalrymple, of North Berwick twin sister to the writer's mother.

‖ An ancient fortress overhanging the Frith of Forth, near the Bass Rock, both the property of the Dalrymple family.

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My stay of three days with Lord Marischal was productive of no very material consequences; yet I had good reason to believe that I enjoyed both his good opinion and his confidence. He is the most innocent of God's creatures; and his heart is much warmer than his head. The place of his abode is the very temple of dullness, and his female companion is perfectly calculated to be the priestess of it. He finds, notwithstanding, an hundred little occupations, which fill up the four-and-twenty hours, in a manner to him not unpleasing; and I really am persuaded he has a conscience that would gild the inside of a dungeon. The history of the feats performed by the bare-legged warriors* in the late war, accompanied by a *pibroch*† in his outer room, have an effect upon the old Don that would delight you. If there is a perfect Whig upon principle to be met with, he is the man—and from conviction so. I am charged with all manner of kind things from him to the Hermitage.

I rejoice that Mary B—— has got a lover worthy of her. Tell her from me, that if she gets over head and ears herself, it will make her a better woman, and a tenderer friend, to the end of her life. *Experto crede Roberto.* There 's Latin for you! The last letter I had from Lady —— seemed to prognosticate marriage for Ernestine and others of the family; but I am become a sceptic on that head, and believe nothing till hands are tied. Say something to me on that article, and pray avoid mystery, which is no where in its place, except in Holy Writ. The princes of the Empire shall know nothing of what passes in Fife, unless what you choose to have made public.

* The Highland Regiments (already mentioned) in Germany.

† A march on the bagpipes.

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My family is torn to pieces by the contending devils of matrimony and jealousy. The last I have already expatiated on; and it would puzzle the wise Solomon himself to settle that controversy. But my bankrupt Forbes, though aged, diseased, and a sot, has found out a Saxon Statira, who will marry him, in spite of common sense, and your brother. Nothing but some very ugly story to patch up, could make this nymph of six-and-twenty take this step, the consequence of which will be that I shall be a bankrupt out of pocket. Frank behaves like an angel since he got his fine coat and feathers; he eats in my house, and, like all the rest of them, he eats the bread of idleness. I have a running footman who has not yet the honour of your acquaintance, but as I have a notion that he may soon run away from me, I shall say little concerning him. I have a housekeeper, who is the very pattern of prudence and purity, as I hear, for I never saw the lady but once, at a distance, during the five months she has been under my roof. N.B. She has no lover that I know of.

If we did not eat most unmercifully our town would be very agreeable. The mother of the Sovereign is the most sociable and easy lady of her rank in Christendom. We shall have routs, riots, and fandangos for six or seven weeks of the carnival. I dare not hint to you what a pretty part I play in all this, but to be sure *" le Ministre D'Angleterre est un homme charmant!"*

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

COLONEL KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

Dresden, March 18*th*, 1770.

DEAR FATHER,

I have, for these three weeks past, been tormented with all the plagues of Egypt, in the shape

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of catarrh, megrim, ear-ache, and toothache. I have fought a stout battle, and attacked them with every weapon, from rhubarb up to bark and a blister. My victory is not yet complete, but I hope in a few days to be essentially master of the field. The end of the carnival was the occasion of the mischief; for we danced incessantly, and had hourly opportunities of catching cold. I have been in the hands of a Dr. Bailies, who claims acquantance with Sir Alexander Dick, from whom he expects a friendly interposition with Sir John Pringle, to procure him a recommendation to Dr. Van Swieten, at Vienna, where he intended to practise inoculation, but has been *refused leave.* The doctor is, I believe, very able in his profession; and as he took his first degrees in Edinburgh, and is well known to my uncle, I shall be glad if he assists him with Sir John. So much for medicine and its professors.

Prudence does not permit me to be as explicit as I could wish with regard to your correspondent,* to whom I paid a visit lately. He was at great pains, even before my introduction, to declare publicly how much he thought himself obliged to you; and the reception I met was looked upon by those who knew him best, as more than commonly gracious. There was a moment and a message, which seemed to prognosticate a mark of favour and remembrance; and Sir Andrew† was strongly of that opinion; however, as I expected, it came in the end to nothing. I believe I told you that Lord Marischal has conveyed to me, since my return, a very gracious invitation to a second visit, which may possibly take place in the end of

* Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

† The minister before mentioned, who resided forty years in Berlin.

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autumn. He mentioned you again upon this occasion, in very distinguished terms; and I know that he said very obliging things of your son, to a *great lady* here, with whom he keeps up a familiar correspondence. All this is perfectly in his style, but however honourable, I am weaned from the hope of its being any way advantageous to my fortune.

Lord Marischal came to meet me at Sir Andrew's, where we passed five days together. My visit to his country residence was of three days; and I had reason to be convinced that it gave the old Don great pleasure. He talked to me with the greatest openness and confidence of all the material incidents of his life; and hinted often that the honour of the clan was now to be supported by our family, for all of whom he had the greatest esteem.*

His taste, his ideas, and his manner of living, are a mixture of Aberdeenshire and the kingdom of Valencia; and as he seeks to make no new friends, he seems to retain a strong, though silent, attachment for his old ones. As to his political principles, I believe him the most sincere of all converts.† I told you of the present

* One brief but emphatic testimony, under the venerable chief's hand, to this effect, has been already given. Another, equally pithy, written some years later, in characters bespeaking increased infirmity, runs thus :—

"LORD MARISCHAL TO SIR R. KEITH, ON HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

"*Potzdam, 15th Oct.*, 1774.

"I am very sorry, good Sir, for your late loss. I have known three generations of your family, and three successive of so worthy men I *know nowhere to be found.* I hope, Sir Basil shall soon give a fourth. I continue without pain, but very weak; if I hold out this winter it will be much.

"Ever faithfully yours,

"M."

† It is affirmed (says Adolphus) that Keith, Earl Marischal, who not long before had been in Spain, and who, at the intercession of the King of Prussia, had been restored to his property in Scotland, communicated,

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of the family seals, most of them trifling baubles; and a small manuscript,* containing some curious anecdotes relating to himself and the people he had unfortunately been engaged with. He never mentioned his private affairs, nor his intentions in futurity, but I have reason to believe that when his stupid companion has had her share—and that a considerable one—the remainder will be very properly disposed of to the Elphinstones. I correspond very regularly with him, and he has even given me hopes of his passing a few days with me here in summer. I thank you for the lights you give me with regard to the other journey,† which I have very much at heart; but the state of public affairs will probably not allow me to think of it for some time. I should be wanting to you and to myself, if I did not bestow all possible attention on the business I am entrusted with; and it has hitherto been amply repaid by the repeated approbation of my superiors.

Since I began this, I have had a most inimitable letter from Lord Marischal. I had mentioned Dr. Bailies to him, and begged he would send me a state of his case and infirmities, that the doctor might prescribe for him. This is a part of his answer:—"I thank you for your advice of consulting the English doctor, to repair my old carcase. I have lately done so by my old coach, and it is now almost as good as new. Please therefore to tell the doctor, that from him I expect a good repair, and shall state the case. First, he must know that the machine is the worse for wear, being near eighty years old. The reparation I

in gratitude, the intelligence of the remarkable treaty, called the "Family Compact," to Mr. Pitt.

* This MS. has, unfortunately, not been recovered.

† A visit, afterwards most happily accomplished, to his father's old friends at Vienna.

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propose he shall begin with is: one pair of new eyes, one pair of new ears, some improvement on the memory. When this is done, we shall ask new legs, and some change in the stomach. For the present, this first reparation will be sufficient; and we must not trouble the doctor too much at once." You see by this, how easy his Lordship's infirmities sit upon him; and it is really so as he says. Your friend Sir Andrew is, I am afraid, less gay; but I have not heard from him these three months. I have been impatient, for several weeks, to know the decision of the Spanish story; but am still as much in the dark as ever. The admiral is a very warm friend, but a sad correspondent; and I have heard from him only once since he arrived in the capital. I forgive him if his activity is properly employed to ensure success. No assistance on my part, or that of my friends, shall be wanting. Adieu, dear sir! Health and happiness attend you and the Hermits.

R. M. K.

George Keith, ninth Earl Marischal, and brother to the celebrated Marshal Keith, attainted for the part he took in the Rebellion of 1715, and obliged to leave his native country, had for many years resided at Berlin, honoured with the intimate friendship and confidence of the Great Frederick. It may be interesting to those who have read of his amiable qualities, and cheerful playfulness under the infirmities of age, to contrast, or rather, connect the picture, with a description of him at an earlier and a very different period; drawn by the piquant pen of his contemporary and quondam flame, the Maréchale de Créqui, who survived him many years, and died at near a hundred, subsequently to the French Revolution.

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"Milord Maréchal," says the lively narratress (writing for the amusement of her grandchildren, with the vivacity for which in earlier life she had been so universally admired), "why should I not speak to you of Milord Maréchal? since every one who tells you of the affection with which he inspired me, will also be obliged to allow that we conducted ourselves with perfect propriety towards each other.

"Milord Maréchal (I shall never be able to write that name without emotion!) was, when I first saw him at my uncle's, a handsome Scotchman, twenty-four years of age, intelligent, sensible, and grave. He came from England, on a mission from the English Jacobites to the refugees; and he had political audiences at the Hotel de Breteuil, where he used to meet his uncles, the Dukes of Perth and Melfort.

"If you wish to have an idea of his personal appearance, you must look at that charming portrait of the handsome Caylus, the favourite of Henry the Third, which you inherited from the Constable de Lesdiguières; to whom, be it added, it was presented by the Queen, having been forgotten by the King in his oratory.

"The young lord fell in love with your grandmother, then a young girl, and not devoid (according to some people), of attractions. We began by looking at one another; first with curiosity, then with interest, and at last with emotion. Next we used to listen to the conversation of each other, without being able to answer a word, and then neither could speak at all, in the presence of the other, owing to our voices at first trembling, and then failing us altogether. So, to make a long story short, he one day said to me *à propos to nothing*, 'If I dared to fall in love with you would you ever forgive me?'

"'I should be enchanted,' said I; and we relapsed

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into our usual formal silence; bestowing as many looks as we could upon each other, and our eyes beaming with silent happiness. In this manner did we spend six weeks or two months. My aunt permitted him to give me some lessons in Spanish, not English, for, in fact, at that time, no one thought of learning English, or any other northern language. Milord George spoke Spanish and Italian quite as well as French; that is to say, perfectly.

"He came once, and sat upon a bench behind mine (for a young lady in my days never was installed in a chair with a back, much less an arm-chair). He related to me, with great glee, the adventures of some Dutch heiress who had eloped with an English Orangeman, and whose parents had put in the London papers that if she would not return, at least to send back the key of the tea-caddy which she had carried away. This set me off laughing, and my cousin Emilie, who was always present at our lessons, and apt to fancy we were making game of her, uttered some remarks. This decided the young lord to make a proposal of marriage for me; which was immediately submitted to my father, my grandfather, and my aunt de Breteuil—the coward! who shrieked at the idea, because the Maréchal of Scotland must be a Protestant.

"I had never thought of that! The discovery burst upon me so suddenly, and so grievously, that I cannot, even now, dwell upon it without shuddering, and without having a bitter recollection of what I suffered. We ascertained, however, that he was a Calvinist, and he said so himself; and, Heaven is my witness that, from that moment, I did not hesitate. I refused the hand of Milord Maréchal, and two days afterwards he set out to return to his own country; from whence he wrote to say that grief and despair would lead him to

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acts that might bring him to the scaffold. There, my child, is the history of the only predilection I ever had in my life for any one except Monsieur de Créqui; to whom I was honest enough to talk of it without reserve.

"When we met again, after the lapse of many years, we made a discovery which equally surprised and affected us both. There is a world of difference between the love which had endured throughout a lifetime, and that which has burned fiercely in our youth, and there paused. In the latter case, time has not laid bare defects, nor taught the bitter lesson of mutual failings; a delusion has subsisted on both sides which experience has not destroyed; and delighting in the idea of each other's perfections, that thought has seemed to smile on both with unspeakable sweetness, till, when we meet, in a grey old age, feelings so tender, so pure, so solemn, arise, that they can be compared to no other sentiments or impressions of which our nature is capable.

"The visit of the Maréchal of Scotland took place in the presence of Madame de Nevers; and it moved her to the depths of her soul. You were then born, my dear grandson! and the Maréchal was seventy years of age. 'Listen,' said he, 'listen to the only French verses I ever composed, and perhaps the only reproaches that ever were addressed to you:—

"'Un trait, lancé par caprice,
M'atteignit dans mon printems:
J'en porte la cicatrice
Encore, sous mes cheveux blancs.
Craignez les maux qu'amour cause,
Et plaignez un insensé
Qui n'a point cueilli la rose,
Et que l'épine a blessé.'"

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COLONEL KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Dresden, Feb. 25th, 1770.

DEAR ANNE,

I do not see any human possibility of filling this huge sheet even with all the nonsense that a Keith can collect; but it shows a good intention to write by the square acre, and so here goes—the Lord knows what. I always knew the Duchess of Gordon to be one of the most bewitching creatures alive, and if she struck the Keiths dumb, she may brag of it to her dying day. I am a little puzzled at a chronological error in your account of the joyful dinner at Lady Dumfries's; since I have the Caledonian Mercury's authority for supposing, that, on that very day, her Grace was busy in bringing into the world a son and heir! If she performed that feat at table, and continued to entertain you all the while, I have nothing more to say; and truly, if any lady in Europe is capable of introducing this new fashion, I firmly believe it to be her Grace. Lay me at her feet and leave me there. I think Lord William's adventure has ended unromantically.

A propos of adventures. In a company of dear creatures, to-day, we had a French newspaper, containing a most dismal story of a young gentleman, who, after a variety of beautiful obstacles, and formidable rivals, had at last obtained the hand and heart of his Dulcinea. On the wedding-day, a joyful company dined, danced, and supped; and the loving couple, having retired about midnight, the guests determined to dance till breakfast next morning. So said, so done; and at nine o'clock the dancers went in a body towards the door of the nuptial chamber, to hail the happy pair. Upon approaching, lamentable cries were heard; the door was burst open, and the young and lovely bride

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was found bathing with tears the dead body of her bridegroom, who must have expired some hours before, as he was already cold. The most pathetic grief ensued; the lady was torn from the chamber in all the agonies of despair, and unable to give any account of the disaster. A fever and frenzy followed next day, and she died within eight-and-forty hours, without ever recovering her senses. *Buried together*, as you may believe. The story is well, and affectingly told in the newspaper: it is said to have happened recently, and the scene is laid in Edinburgh! Now, Miss, my dear creatures insist, that I shall (through your means), dive to the bottom of this mystery, and report accordingly. So much for that. N.B.—No marks of violence on the dead husband. Foul play from a rival suspected by the newswriter. *I* swear that there never was a man or maid, *poisoned* in Caledonia. I foresee your answer. 'Tis all a fiction!*

After a tragedy comes a farce; I'll tell you a story. You must know, that we have more pages here than any court in Christendom; all pickles! One of these little gentry, during the last fair, stood for a considerable time at a booth where toys were sold by an ill-natured old woman. His looks spoke desire, his cloth forbade credit; and the beldame told him peevishly not to take up the room of one who *might* become a buyer. The page observed that the lady had, upon a shelf in her booth, a pitcher filled with cream, and, as all pages have packthread in their pockets, he slily fixed one end of his clue to the handle of the pitcher and retired grumbling, to a private corner at some distance. There

* The most natural solution which at this distance of time can occur is, that the French editor had got hold of, and revived, a distorted version of the "Bride of Lammermoor," actually communicated to Sir Walter Scott by the writer's sister.

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he sat *perdue*, with his packthread in his hand, watching the moment when he could tumble down the pitcher upon the old woman's head.

At the instant, the *Gouverneur des Pages*, a grave, sententious, *leaden* man, came that way, and seeing little pickle in the corner, he wisely smelt a rat. "What are you doing, you little dog?" "Nothing." "I suspect you have been pilfering; show me your hands." Behold the packthread, which the governor immediately seized. Supposing some stolen goods at the end, he pulled, and pulled; the nimble page took to his heels; down came the pitcher; out screamed the beldame, and she and twenty of her neighbours, fell with tongue and nail upon old gravity; who, being caught in the very fact, was scratched and hooted out of the fair, without the possibility of making a defence. If you knew the proud old fool of a governor, you would kiss the little page for his cunning!

My patience is worn to the stumps, and I am more than half inclined to be peevish. Imagine to yourself, that, in this critical moment, there are no less than five mails due from England! I am teazed to death with all the idle and contradictory news which the under-strappers in politics invent, and retail us every day; and my only defence is pleading, *ignoramus*. To a man of my impatience and importance, this is a situation which would lead one half of my countrymen to a *halter*; but I am too poor a man to take so noble a revenge of myself for the obstinacy of an easterly wind.

As to public festivities, we have them of all colours. Four masquerades, and two court balls per week. Dinners and suppers by scores, and little operas, &c. I wax old or lazy, for I own that it is a sort of relief to me to think that Sunday next ends the carnival. You shall have a longer and better letter during Lent. This

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thing of shreds and patches, you are to look upon only as a ram-race of nonsense, as I can fairly say I never looked either behind or before me, since I started. I performed this sheet in about half an hour, which is no bad travelling in such roads. My kind regards to Mrs. W——, and her *ancient*, who shall be promoted. Love to Lady Die, and her husband; the Abbey-hill, the Castle-hill, and the Cross; with Crawfords, Chalmers, Berrys, and Browns. Tell Dolly Dundas that I was so much in love with her one day, that I kissed the door of her house, in returning home from dinner. This declaration comes rather late, but no help for it! The Hermits know my love and duty; and if they don't think this a pretty piece of prose, I have lost my labour, which, indeed, was only that of the fingers. I will not turn over, that 's flat!

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO H. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Dresden, April 7th, 1771.

My dear Harry,

In writing to one of the *Gang*, I write to them all; and I have the strongest proofs of the activity with which they espouse the interest of an absent friend. The Lord-Registrar has told me what your feelings were upon my *removal*;* and a letter I wrote to him the moment I was made acquainted with it, will have shown you the impression it made upon me. The sum total of the matter is, my dear Harry, that the King may command my services to the utmost verge of the globe;

* To the more honourable, but, at that time, peculiarly delicate mission at the Court of Denmark; which, (like other circumstances at the time unwelcome,) ultimately raised to fame and fortune the unwilling Envoy.

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but I can never suppose that so gracious a master, or any of his confidential servants, can, in return for services which they are pleased to approve, lessen all the comforts of my life, and at the same time add greatly to my expense, without increasing my income. This is a plain *matter of fact*, which needs only to be understood to be redressed; and I have almost a certainty, that if the Duke of Gloucester is pleased to grant me his protection, my claim can meet with no opposition. The House will be glad to do a friendly thing by me, and then all will undoubtedly go well. You cannot imagine how much I am obliged to Mr. Conway's friendship upon this occasion; and I am sure that his representation will add weight to the request I have made for additional rank and emolument. You know I am not interested; but in the change of my housekeeping, and the necessity of buying a service of plate, I must be attentive to my affairs, in order to be just. I have been ten times tempted to ask leave to go home for a month or two; but the fear of being thought negligent in the King's affairs, and still more the cruel temper of the times, prevent me. I would not add to the *embarras* of the King's servants; I would not be the carrier of a complaint, or wear a face of discontent at present, no, not for an empire! The King's service shall be carried on to the best of my abilities, and a time may come when I may be thought to deserve a reward.

My dear Harry, there is one comfortable feeling, which not even the cold climate of Denmark can damp; and that is the grateful sense of favours bestowed by men whom I love and esteem above all others. The satisfaction which arises from this reflection, is not only agreeable, but necessary, to a man who is probably to pass a great part of his life in honourable banishment.

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I am very willing to exert my utmost powers for the King's service in Denmark; but it is not to be expected that I should wish to make a long stay in that most comfortless country.

Poor Basil! I must prevail upon the King of Denmark to make him governor of one of his thousand islands! * Keep the honest fellow in good spirits, and tell him that I shall write to him in a post or two. Adieu, my dear Harry. Love to sweet Bess, and her brats, and all the clan. I am your's from the bottom of my heart.

R. M. KEITH.

The regret with which the writer of the above letter exchanged the ease, freedom, and social advantages of a small, but pleasant Court, for the anticipated stiffness and not unforeseen difficulties, of one where disunion, faction, and feuds more formidable still, were known to prevail—are very evident. He bade adieu reluctantly to the Elector and his mother (already mentioned as the "most sociable and easy lady of her rank in Europe"), the former of whom, shortly after, testified his esteem for the minister by a magnificent present of china, the first service he had ever given; while the latter, in addition to a gift (*non*-ministerial, for she never gave such) of a snuff-box with her picture, continued during his stay in Denmark his "weekly correspondent, on as easy a footing," says he, "as my sister Anne."

Colonel Keith gladly availed himself of the few weeks which elapsed between his quitting Saxony and entering on his functions in Denmark, to accomplish the visit to Vienna, to pay his respects to the Imperial family, and

* A curious prediction for one who, by going to Denmark, made him governor of Jamaica.

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become acquainted with his father's numerous friends there, to which he had been urged by Mr. Keith; and which, as we have seen, a sense of public duty had alone prevented his requesting permission for sooner. If anything could have consoled the reluctant Envoy, for his Hyperborean destination, or paved the way, unconsciously, for his future domestication in the very capital which now so kindly opened its arms to his "father's son," it would have been the reception described in the following letter:—

COLONEL KEITH TO HIS FATHER.

Dresden, May 3rd, 1771.

DEAR FATHER,

I sit down, in the *first moment* of my leisure, to give you the most satisfactory account in my power of every material occurrence of my agreeable journey to Vienna. The annexed journal will let you see the dates, and I mean to talk to you of your friends, each in their turn.

From the very distinguished reception I met with from the Empress and Emperor,* I may be permitted to place these illustrious persons at the head of my list. Her Imperial Majesty mentioned, with great pleasure, your good services to the King, your attachment for her, and the probity and zeal which distinguished your mission. She said (laughing), that she had more than once had political quarrels with you, but that she always attributed your warmth to the best motives; and that a difference of opinion had never altered her esteem. She took Lord Stormont† to witness that she had repeatedly inquired of him after your situation and

* Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II.

† Then her Majesty's minister at Vienna.

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health. That she had given commissions formerly to Seilern, and lately to Belgioioso, to let you know how much she interested herself in your welfare. She asked me particularly after your children—your manner of life, and settlement. I told her Majesty that I had long hoped to have been presented to her by you; but that a late indisposition, and my change of mission, had prevented what I was sure would have afforded you the greatest pleasure. The Empress expressed herself obliged to you for your intention, and ordered me to say every thing to you in her name which could convince you of her invariable esteem. She found a resemblance between you and me, and was struck with the similitude of our voices. I was surprised, I own, at the change in her Majesty's figure and features from all her pictures; and sorry to see that her health was far from being good, as she looked pursy and short-breathed, and has, I am told, swellings in her limbs, as well as one arm. The Emperor* said he remembered you perfectly; your person, your conduct, and the general approbation they met with; was already informed of your style of life, and was pleased that your retreat was so agreeable; mentioned with great clearness and judgment the Court of Dresden, and that I am now accredited to—a great many truths, but represented with all the good-nature possible. He commanded me to assure you of his good wishes, and ended by saying that as *he* could not foresee a journey so far into the north, as my future residence, he must expect to see me again in his dominions, as he wished to see *your son more than once.*† I saw the Emperor in town

* The son of Maria Theresa, Joseph the Second.

† This flattering expression, so unexpectedly realised by Sir R. M Keith presenting his credentials as British Minister to Vienna within little more than a year, was then proved to have been perfectly sincere.

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every day during my stay; and cannot say enough of his easy and condescending manner. Dietrichstein and Rosenberg behaved as you could have expected; especially the first, who gave me several letters for Denmark, and amused the Emperor by offering to accompany me thither.

"The Archdukes Ferdinand and Maximilian, with the eldest Archduchess, and Elizabeth, were together at my being presented. They were all very gracious, but particularly the eldest Archduchess, who claimed aloud the privilege of being amongst your best friends. I told her Royal Highness that I had always known you grateful for her singular goodness to you. The audiences were shortened by the dining hour; as those of their Imperial Majesties had been longer than usual. So much for the Court.

"Prince Kaunitz's reception of me was extremely civil. After many questions about my journey, and destination, he ended the conversation by saying that you had always honoured him with your friendship; that he felt that sentiment was continued on his part, and should be happy if it were hereditary on mine; bid me see him often and judge of his sincerity. The second time I saw him he was indisposed, peevish, and spoke little: but the day we dined together at Stormont's he filled out a bumper, and made all the company drink to his worthy and amiable friend, Old Keith, to which he added many other handsome things. When I took leave, he said, "I beg you to remember me with affection to your father, and hope you will look upon Vienna as a place to which (with emphasis) you will *always be most welcome.*"* I must not omit that the Empress,

* This also, it will be seen, found full realization, in a degree of courtesy and deference towards the writer, very unusual in that haughty minister.

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and afterwards Kaunitz, took opportunities of expressing in my hearing, their high esteem for Lord Stormont, which indeed cannot be better founded.

"Prince Colloredo received me perfectly, and regretted that as he and his family were to set out for Baden next day, he could not have an opportunity of making his house agreeable to the son of a man whom he esteemed and loved. He invited me to Baden, where I had not time to go. Every person in the Colloredo family took an interest in me, and Baron Hagen, whom I met there, was cordiality itself.

"I must tell you a little anecdote which gave me real pleasure, and took prodigiously at Vienna. The second day of my being there, I was strolling about the streets, and stopped, with a spy-glass in my hand, at the front of the Colloredo, and Chancery buildings. While I looked up at the statues, an old servant (porter to Prince Colloredo), knew me at once, and, stepping forward, with the kindest familiarity, and slapping me on the shoulder, said in German—Precisely what your dear papa used to do twenty years ago! Nothing could be more benevolent than the look with which he accompanied this, and I own I was struck with it. I mentioned the agreeable sensation it had given me, in the company where I passed the evening, and next day I found the porter and I had been in the mouths of all Vienna. It is, in my opinion, no bad sign of the people of a great capital, who expressed themselves pleased with so simple an incident as this! Nothing could be kinder than the whole Harrach family,* and indeed they vied with each other, to the last moment, in every mark of attention.

* It will be remembered, that a slight, though unfounded, suspicion of a lack of reciprocal kindness of *expression*, on his son's part, towards this family, employed his father's thoughts in his last illness.

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Ferdinand and Madame live splendidly at their garden; and Ernest with his family most comfortably. Count Firmian deserves a separate sheet for his own share. In my life I never saw a man of so winning an address, from the plain unaffected character which his first look promises. His friendship for you is of the most genuine kind, and his expression of it most persuasive. He made me promise to see him at Milan, and insisted upon my assuring you that he never could forget the obligation *he had to your salutary advice.* I was glad to see the high opinion, both of the Court and public, for Count Firmian: and I heartily wish that the Archduke Ferdinand may do justice to his merit, and contribute to the ease and happiness of his life. Baron Hagen, with whom I saw the Count almost every day, seemed equally your friend; and recapitulated with pleasure the many happy days you had passed together. The Princess Esterhazy, and your German Lubomirska, were *more* than civil to me, each in their different way. Polite and kind inquiries, on the one hand, and the most vulgar warm-heartedness on the other: but both meaning the same thing. Prince Francis Lichtenstein, and his lady, sent to me, from the first, to bespeak a day. I had a noble dinner at their house, where all the persons I knew intimately were invited. I have mentioned in my journal Madame D'Uhlefeld,* than whom I never saw a more respectable woman. Her daughters, Madame de *Thun,*† and Wallenstein, live entirely in Lord Stormont's *coterie,* and are certainly among the most agreeable women in Vienna."

* Widow of a former Chancellor of the Empire, the predecessor of Prince Kaunitz.

† This lady became, with an equally amiable Madame de Pergen, the chosen friend of Sir M. Keith, round whom all Lord Stormont's *coterie* immediately congregated.

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A second trip to Berlin had, as we have seen, formed a favourite project of Colonel Keith's; and the same opportunity was seized to accomplish it, both his venerable kinsman, and the monarch who had suggested the visit, being in a state of health which seemed to prognosticate that it would be a final one. Its results are thus given, in a letter to Mr. Keith:—

"My good Lord Marischal seemed mightily glad to see me at Potzdam. He is grown twice as thin and tottering as when you saw him; but says, with great good humour, that he feels all the springs of the machine wearing out with an equal pace, and that he hopes, when it falls to pieces, it will be without much pain or preparation. He seemed much pleased with the Elphinstones, to whom he has lately given the little ready money he had: and told me he had given Mr. Keith a good purchase of Dunottar, as a reward for the attachment of his family. Your correspondent * sent his coach for me, and said, in an hour's *tête-à-tête* conversation, more flattering and well-turned things than would fill a quire of paper. His questions were so particular and minute, that it would have surprised you. My answer to his inquiry *'Si vous étiez sur vos Terres?'* diverted him much. I told him, *'Que pour des Terres, vous n'en possédiez pas la grandeur de sa chambre; et que cependant il y avait très peu de gens plus heureux que vous, et vôtre famille.'* I could see that poverty had never presented itself in so fair an aspect to him as at that moment. He repeated several times his wish to have had Murrays Hall† attached (by order of his superiors) to his person, and added, that if the people concerned had

* Frederick the Great.

† Colonel Keith himself, thus named, *more Scottic*é, from his estate.

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given him time, he would have made his wishes known to them. He hoped another opportunity would offer, and said he should never lose sight of the obligations he owed to a certain clan. He recapitulated several of these good services, beginning with those of the late Marshal Keith, and finishing with those which came nearer home to me. In short, all was more than civil; and a time may come when some advantage may arise from a partiality to the Tweeddale laird, which is the natural consequence. The same language is uniformly held by him in public, as I have ample proofs, and on a variety of occasions. Your correspondent's *heir-at-law* * and his lady, made use of almost the same expressions, with the head of the family, in mentioning you and yours. I dare hardly flatter myself with the hope of seeing Lord Marischal again, though I wish it much, from the real affection I bear him.

"The day after my return to Dresden, the Electress Dowager set out for Aix-la-Chapelle. Her goodness to me had been uniform, and, as a last proof of it, she gave me a very handsome snuff-box of Saxon stones with her picture. This is no common favour, for since her widowhood she makes no presents to ministers. I told you that the Elector had ordered me a magnificent service of china (the first he has given), but I could not then mention the very honourable testimony he conveys to the King in some expressions in his letter, which of course gives me much satisfaction. The manner in which this first attempt in my present walk has been received, gives me encouragement for the future. The intimacy which I had contracted with several

* The Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia. Somewhat of the flattering confidence in Sir R. M. Keith, manifested by the former when Sovereign (during the memorable Congress of Sistovo), may have had this hereditary source.

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very amiable people at Dresden, makes me feel a great deal in parting from them: but Saxony is so centrical, that I may flatter myself with revisiting it more than once.

"Lord Marischal has agreed to my erecting a decent gravestone to the memory of his late brother,* and in the place where he fell. They sent me two inscriptions, but they were long and languid. I have engaged Baron Hagen and his friend old *Metastasio* to touch me up something manly and *energetic*, and in the course of this summer, my tribute of veneration for the memory of a brave and honest man will be recorded on monumental marble.† I need not tell you that upon that marble there will be no more mention of me than of the *man in the moon*."

One more extract from Colonel Keith's Journal, containing his first impressions of Copenhagen, will

* Inscription on the Monument at Hochkirchen, erected by his relation Sir R. Murray Keith, to the memory of Marshal Keith:—

JACOBO KEITH
Gulielmi Comitis Marescelli Hered.
Regni Scotiæ,
Et Mariæ Drummond, Filio,
Frederici Borussorum Regis
Summo Exercitûs Præfecto,
Viro
Antiquis moribus et militari virtute claro,
Qui
Dum in prælio non procul hinc
Inclinatum suorum aciem
Marte, manu, voce, et exemplo
Restituebat
Pugnans ut Heroas decet
Occubuit
Anno 1758. Mense Oct. 1.

† A noble monument at Berlin was afterwards erected by the King of Prussia.

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serve to pave the way for the more detailed account of Queen Carolina Matilda, and of other persons and occurrences in that most important scene of his diplomatic labours which originally formed the sole object of the present publication; but which it is hoped may derive enhanced interest from the previous insight acquired by the reader into the character and feelings of its hero.

"Copenhagen" writes Colonel Keith to his father, "is by far a finer city than I had figured to myself, or had a right to expect, from the other Danish towns I had seen upon the road. The streets are broad, the openings and squares spacious, and the palace, as well as several of the public buildings, magnificent. The street in which my house stands, leads to the new square, which is composed of *palaces*, built uniformly, and embellished by the famous equestrian statue of the late King; which is, in all probability, the finest in Europe. It is perfectly finished, but not yet uncovered; and you will hardly believe that the statue, and its ornaments alone, could have cost one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, which I am assured is true. I have hired Mr. Gunning's house, and the impossibility of finding a furnished one here made it *absolutely necessary* for me to purchase his furniture, for which I paid him, two days ago, five hundred and twelve pounds! From this one ruinous article, you may judge of the rest; and of the fair claim I had to additional emolument, upon being nominated to this commission, which it never entered into my brain to solicit. Climate, comfort, society, *all against me*—the ruin of my fortune into the bargain would be too hard.

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"My first audiences are over, and now my business must be to deserve the public and private esteem; and then I shall be prepared for whatever circumstances occur. One of great moment, and for which we are daily looking, is the Queen's confinement, which has already passed its allotted period.*

* Of her second child, a daughter, Princess of Holstein Augustenburg, and mother to the late Queen of Denmark.

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MEMOIRS OF

CAROLINA MATILDA, QUEEN OF DENMARK.*

INTRODUCTION.

It is seldom that the three-act drama of human life, with its morning of bright hopes, its busy checkered noon, and evening of faded joys, and deepening clouds, is played out, and with a tragic consummation, ere the chief actor in it has numbered four-and-twenty years. But such has been (perhaps to "point a moral," if not to "adorn a tale") the not unfrequent fate of female royalty. And if, at that early period, the grave opened literally its sheltering arms to the subject of the following memoir, the gates of a neighbouring fortress had closed, scarcely less effectually, at the same age, on her injured great grandmother, Sophia Dorothea, consort of George I.

Nor did an earlier occupant of one of the British thrones, our own Mary Stuart, bid a less final "farewell," not only to "all her greatness," but to every joy of life and freedom, when crossing the threshold of her first English prison, than when, twenty years later, the

* Sister of King George III., and wife of Christian VII. of Denmark.

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pall descended on her headless corpse in the hall of Fotheringay!

The parallel does not end here. All three were endowed (fatally, perhaps, for them as sovereigns) with the perilous gift of beauty, and with talents only calculated to deepen the feeling of contempt for brutal partners whose indifference, cruelty, and indignities, palliate, though they may fail to justify, the alienation which was their natural consequence. Over the guilt, too, or innocence of these three lovely princesses, there hangs (though with widely varying intensity of shade) a cloud of impenetrable mystery; nor will posterity probably ever precisely agree as to the degree in which their avowed and unquestionable imprudences hovered upon, or crossed the barrier which separates levity from vice. The overt acts of Mary, alas! though the cheerfulness of her long prison hours and fortitude in death shield her (in every female bosom at least) from the charge of murder, were such as to leave a stain on her feminine purity; while the uniform serenity of Sophia Dorothea's still longer seclusion, and her refusal to quit it, to share with her unamiable consort the throne of England, are eminently favourable to the supposition of her freedom from guilt.

From so protracted an ordeal death came, perhaps kindly, to release the subject of the following memoir. But if the blameless, nay, exemplary tenor of her few brief years of retirement in her brother's dominions, the utmost calmness and firmness in the prospect of dissolution, uniform protestations of innocence, amid the consolations of religion, and the inexpressible grief of a sorrowing household (whose disinterested panegyrics, when their subject was, alas! no more, mingled with the tears of a population by whom she was adored), can warrant a favourable conclusion, she, who could

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thus depart without a sigh or a regret, and that, too, when the fairest prospects of restoration to more than her former share of power and dignity were actually within her grasp, may surely be deemed more "sinned against than sinning," and though unquestionably imprudent unburdened with actual crime.

The unhappy Princess, whose wrongs and misfortunes will form the subject of the following pages, was the posthumous child of His Royal Highness Frederick, Prince of Wales, (eldest son of George II.) and sister to King George III. She was born July 22, 1751, four months and eight days after the death of her father, and christened Carolina Matilda. Had the nativity of this royal infant been cast, no astrologer, however fertile in evil omens, would have foretold that she was to be hurled, from the pinnacle of worldly grandeur, into a sea of troubles; and to become in the bloom of youth the sport of misfortune, and the victim of unrelenting hatred.

From her tenderest years, this amiable Princess displayed the most endearing vivacity, and a sweetness of temper, which secured to her the affection of her attendants. And, as she approached a maturer period, her heart and mind became susceptible of the most generous sentiments, and of a cultivation which fitted her to shine in the loftiest sphere, with reputation and dignity. Her education reflects the greatest credit on her able surviving parent. She was well read in modern history, conversant with geography; spoke with correctness, eloquence, and fluency, both French and German, and understood Latin. Her diction in English was pure, and her elocution graceful. She

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could with facility repeat the finest passages from our dramatic poets, and often rehearsed, with great judgment and propriety, whole scenes from Shakespeare's most admired plays.

Nor was the casket unworthy of the gem within. Of her person, various contemporary descriptions agreeing in their main features, though varying slightly with years and circumstances, have been handed down to us. The English writer, to whom we are indebted for the above catalogue of her accomplishments, speaking of her as she quitted her native shores, thus expresses himself:—"Her person was above the middle size, and though well shaped, rather inclined to what the French call *embonpoint*. Her face was a regular oval, and her eye-brows, arched with symmetry, added sweetness and expression to her beautiful eyes. Her lips and teeth exhibited the lively colours of coral, and the whiteness of alabaster. She had a good complexion, though not so fair as some of the royal family, and her hair was of a light chestnut. Her voice was sweet and melodious, and her aspect rather gracious than majestic; but she had in her *tout ensemble* a most prepossessing physiognomy."*

Such, at sixteen, was Carolina Matilda of England. Subsequent portraits of her while the ornament of the Court of Denmark, and at a later and sadder period, when still lending grace and dignity to exile at Zell, will occur in the course of these memoirs.

It is delightful to find that in all the three so widely differing spheres, benevolence formed her prevailing attribute. Her girlish privy-purse, while in England, had been liberally opened to indigent families at Kew. In a Danish work, published many years after her

* Memoirs of an Unfortunate Queen.

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decease, she is represented, on the authority of one long about her person, as herself visiting the poor around her residence at Fredericksbourg; and during the happy period of her earlier stay in the country, ere involved in the stormy politics of the day, as bearing with her own hands, not only supplies of money to destitute families, but stockings knitted for the children, by herself and her ladies. During her imprisonment at Cronenbourg, she found leisure, amid her overwhelming calamities, to extend her compassion to some unhappy state prisoners, her companions in captivity, to whom she daily sent two dishes from her scantily furnished table, and for whom she weekly saved a sum from her own insufficient allowance; and during her brief residence of two years and a half at Zell, her unconstrained liberality and beneficence, which frequently left her without money for her own personal expenses, so endeared her to the whole population, that they followed, drowned in tears, the funeral of one mourned by them for years as a general benefactress.

Thus richly endowed by nature, and cultivated by education, was the youthful Princess whom, at sixteen, political considerations were about to consign to a sadly uncongenial partner. "Whether," says her biographer, "the picture of the young monarch who had asked her in marriage, had not conveyed to her mind the idea of the man she could prefer, or that she looked upon her destination as an honourable exile into the frozen regions of the north, it is certain that her future elevation to a throne, which she was fitted to adorn, inspired her Royal Highness with no pleasing sensations. On the contrary, it was observed by the ladies of her attendance, after this alliance was declared, that she became pensive, reserved and disquieted, though always gracious; without taking upon herself more state, or

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requiring more homage from the persons admitted into her presence."

But however much subsequent events, and further acquaintance with the moral and mental deficiencies of Christian VII. might lead all connected with their victim to deplore this union, it was not on the score of deficiency in personal recommendations, or even of original talent, though of a peculiar and eccentric kind, that Carolina Matilda must have entertained misgivings as to her chances of happiness with her boy-bridegroom. He is thus described from Danish authorities on his first accession to the kingdom, at the age of seventeen:—"The person of the young king, though considerably under the middle height, was finely proportioned, light and compact, but yet possessing a considerable degree of agility and strength. His complexion remarkably fair, his features, if not handsome, were regular, his eyes blue, lively and expressive, his hair very light; he had a good forehead and aquiline nose, a handsome mouth, and fine set of teeth. He was elegant rather than magnificent in his dress, courteous in his manners, though warm and irritable in his temper, but his anger, if soon excited, was easily appeased, and he was generous to profusion."

Such were the person and disposition of Christian VII., till surrounded by his ambitious step-mother by a crowd of voluptuous and gay young courtiers, in whose society his morals were corrupted, and his constitution undermined; and betrayed into all manner of pernicious excesses by those whose duty it was to have watched over, admonished, and protected him.

There were various circumstances which, independently of the limited number of Protestant royal families affording suitable alliances for a daughter of England, seemed to hold out flattering, though fallacious, auguries

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respecting the proposals of the young King of Denmark. Himself the offspring of an English princess—no trifling recommendation in British eyes—he might be presumed to inherit, along with the amiable dispositions of his mother, if not the rare talents for government, at least the virtuous and moral qualities which so richly adorned his father, Frederick V., one of the most excellent monarchs whom premature decease, at the age of forty-six, ever snatched from a sorrowing nation.

When the Prince Royal was proclaimed King, amidst the acclamations of "Long live Christian VII.," the people cried out, "May he not only live long, but reign well like his father!"

That such would be the case, thus descended, it was not unnatural for his English connections to conclude, or at least to hope, of a youth of seventeen; who, if he had hitherto certainly manifested no talent, is admitted to have joined to a fatal facility of disposition, a good-nature and graciousness which, during his stay in England, even after his marriage, and when his character was better known, served in some degree to redeem his deficiencies in solid instruction, and devotion to frivolous pursuits.

But had his natural endowments been greater than they were, there was much in the young Prince's position to counterbalance his paternal advantages. At the age of three years, he had lost (in 1751) his mother, Louisa of England;* and on the union, a year after, of his father with Juliana Maria of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, that Princess—if cherishing, as is hinted, (even in the life-time of her husband) the ambitious projects she afterwards carried into effect—had ample opportunities of repressing, rather than fostering, at that tender age, the slender capacities and unformed principles of

* Daughter of George II., an amiable and accomplished Princess.

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the heir to the crown; who alone stood in the way of its possession by her own son Frederick, his junior by only four years.

The boundless authority bequeathed, under such peculiar and delicate circumstances, to a princess, whose talents (except for political intrigue) no party has represented as at all distinguished, forms, perhaps, the sole impeachment on the discernment and judgment of Frederick V. "This King," says a contemporary writer, "though one of the wisest monarchs of his time, either blinded by affection, or deluded by the acts of his second Queen, gave to this ambitious stepmother a power which the dictates of sound policy should never have vested in a woman of her aspiring views. She was to direct the councils of the young Sovereign, and to keep in her hands the reins of government, till he should have attained the years of maturity. The Dowager Queen, Juliana Maria, even before the King had closed his eyes, planned the bold and iniquitous scheme of snatching the sceptre from the feeble hands of Christian VII., whose youth and timidity forwarded the evil designs of this artful princess. She had often, it is said, even during the lifetime of Frederick V., displayed, in his absence, her ill-will towards the Prince Royal, he being the sole obstacle to her son Frederick's mounting the throne, to which she was passionately desirous of raising him.

"Whether through fear, or policy, when at the age of seventeen, Christian VII. attained the crown, he paid his mother-in-law, notwithstanding the disdain with which she treated him, all the deference which seemed due to her rank and authority in council. He never testified his firmness, or had the courage to defend his own opinion, on any other occasion than in the choice of Carolina Matilda of England; whilst the

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Queen Dowager neither approved of the alliance, nor of the time fixed for the union." Happy would it have been for all concerned, had she succeeded in averting the inauspicious alliance!

It was under circumstances thus critical and unpropitious to future happiness that the amiable and ill-fated Carolina Matilda gave her hand, in the sixteenth year of her age, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on the 1st of October, 1766, to Christian VII. of Denmark. The parting between the Queen of Denmark and her royal mother, the Princess of Wales, was extremely tender; the young Queen, on getting into the coach, was observed to shed tears, which greatly affected the populace assembled in Pall Mall to witness her departure.

"Her Majesty was dressed in bloom-colour with white flowers. Wherever she passed, the earnest wishes of the people were for her health, and praying God to protect her from the perils of the sea. A gentle melancholy seemed to affect her on account of leaving her family, and the place of her birth; but, upon the whole, she carried an air of serenity and majesty which exceedingly moved every one that beheld her.

"On the 18th the Queen of Denmark arrived at Altona, and it is impossible to express the joy with which she was received. The bridge prepared for the royal reception was covered with scarlet cloth, on one side whereof were ranged the ladies, and on the other the men; and at the end were two rows of young women, dressed in white, who strewed flowers before her Majesty as she approached. The illuminations on the occasion were *inconceivable*."

How irresistibly do these details of the contemporary chronicler, in the quaint language of the times—the "bloom-coloured" dress, white wreath, and flowers strewed before the virgin bride by the young maidens

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of her new dominions, suggest to those acquainted with the sad sequel, the idea of an unconscious victim proceeding to her doom! Yet, among those who witnessed this brilliant reception, who would have ventured to predict that within five years, the interposition of her royal brother of England, would have been called for, to rescue from popular fury, and the virulence of faction, the princess so enthusiastically hailed; or imagined that the cannon which pealed their welcome from the forts of her new capital would, within that period, with extorted courtesy, give the signal for her perpetual exile from a kingdom, of which she had been the delight and ornament? It was not till after the event, that an honest eye-witness thus remarks: "The tears of her Majesty on parting from the dear country in which she drew her first breath, might have inspired in those who beheld them, gloomy forebodings as to the issue of the voyage she was about to undertake."

There were circumstances in the birth and education of the youthful traveller, which, while they enhanced the pangs of separation to all concerned, must have tended to unfit her in a peculiar manner to encounter not only avowed or ill-concealed hostility, but even the usual cold ceremonial of a then excessively stiff and formal northern court; which, from the accounts of her reception by such of its members as had been deputed to meet her on landing, (as ascribed to herself, but more probably derived from some of her suite) was abundantly freezing. "The gentlemen and ladies sent to compliment me," (says a letter not sufficiently authenticated to find insertion, but corroborated by many genuine testimonies in the ensuing pages,) "made no addition to my entertainment; besides the reservedness and gravity peculiar to their nation, they thought it was a mark of

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respect and submission, never to presume to answer me but by monosyllables, and they appeared in the circle, inanimate, like the wax figures in Westminster Abbey."

Repulsive as an etiquette so frigid might have appeared to any princess of sixteen, fresh from the comparatively unconstrained domestic circle with which George the Third, and his consort, delighted to surround themselves—it was from a hearth more hallowed still—from almost the bosom of a happy private family, that Carolina Matilda was transported to the morally and physically frozen regions of the north. Born after the early and sudden demise of a father, whom political circumstances had estranged from the throne, to which he did not live to succeed, how fondly must this posthumous pledge of conjugal affection, have been folded to a widowed mother's heart; and how genial must have been the atmosphere in which the natural talents, and acquired accomplishments of the youngest of a large and happy family, were precociously developed!

If the merit of *vraisemblance* (if not of authenticity) belongs to a collection of letters, published in England just after her decease, when numbers could have recognised or disputed the likeness—the liveliness of her disposition, and familiarity of her intercourse with her friends and correspondents, equalled that facility of epistolary style for which the royal family of England has ever been distinguished; while the total absence of all knowledge even of the external world, (implied in her never having been further from London than Windsor, previously to her inauspicious marriage) sent her forth as unprepared to encounter its stern realities, as some tender exotic, from her favourite summer abode at Kew, would have been to meet the blasts of the

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climate, to which she was herself transplanted. And to pursue the parallel, familiar to all who, like her, take delight in "observing and directing a garden," when, to the chill of a reception, calculated to send back the warm blood of youth in a frozen tide to the heart—succeeded a trying sunshine of prosperity and power, too much akin to the brief scorching summer of hyperborean regions—who can wonder that the English flower sunk prematurely withered beneath the noxious vicissitude? With no stay in an imbecile and profligate husband, to whom she could legitimately cling for support; estranged by distance from her own fond parent, and destined to find in the nominal one of her consort, a personification of the qualities ascribed (often erroneously) to stepmothers,

"A little more than kin, and less than kind—".

could it be matter of surprise that the first prop, however essentially unsafe and unworthy, which held out its fallacious aid to lift from the dust the tempest-beaten, nay trampled, scion of royalty, should be eagerly hailed, and grasped with fatal tenacity, till the same long-gathering storm laid them both prostrate in a night?

Had even the "craft and dissimulation" ascribed by some authors to the Queen Dowager, induced her to affect cordiality towards her stepson's wife, now that the knot was indissolubly tied; her previous hostility to the match, and its motives, were no secret, and are thus broadly stated by a contemporary writer:

"As from the weak and delicate constitution of the young monarch, he might probably have quitted this life without posterity, had his marriage been deferred, the secret motive for her opposition was manifest to all. Moreover, she saw in the young Queen a rival in the

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ascendancy she had usurped over the mind of the King; and in the power she was resolved to maintain in the council. She could not conceal her resentment, when Queen Matilda first appeared at Copenhagen, and made her entry into the capital, with all the advantages of youth and beauty, amid the unanimous acclamations of a people, delighted with her grace and affability."

"It was neither," says a Danish writer, in describing this *entrée*, "the powerful connexions, the high lineage, nor the ample dowry, which this young and interesting princess brought to my country, that commanded universal admiration and esteem; but her youth, her innocence, her beauty, and her *modest retiring* graceful demeanour, that fascinated all who beheld her. I saw this ill-fated princess when she first set her foot on the soil of Denmark. I did not join in the shouts of the multitude; but I was charmed with her appearance. She was received like a divinity, and almost worshipped, at least by those of the male sex. Her animated beauteous features, her fine blue eyes, beamed with delight on all around her. That youth must have been a stoic, whose heart, if not devoted to some prior object, would not have been enslaved by this fair foreigner, then little more than fifteen."

"The conduct of Matilda," pursues the same eye-witness, "on her arrival in Denmark, was such as left no room but for approbation; possessing somewhat of the *hauteur* by which her family are distinguished, she certainly did not forget the dignity of her station. While the King, descending from his rank, made companions of *his* gay young courtiers, Matilda exacted the homage from the ladies of her court to which her exalted station entitled her; and, as was natural at her age, seemed more fond of the show and pageantry of royalty, than desirous of political influence. Notwith-

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standing the vices of her husband, as he had a large fund of good-nature and generosity, she might have avoided the calamities that too soon overtook her, had it not been for the insinuations of conflicting nobles, emulous for power, and the ceaseless intrigues of Juliana Maria. The acclamations which resounded whenever Matilda appeared in public, smote on her heart as the death-knell of her ambitious hopes, of securing the crown of Denmark for Prince Frederick (her own son), then in his thirteenth year. Still, she did not relinquish her darling projects, even when her hopes were blasted by the tidings that filled all Denmark with exultation. She had, from the time the Queen's pregnancy was announced, secluded herself in a great measure from court. For the two last months she buried herself, as it were, in her palace of Fredensborg, till, to complete her dismay, on the 28th January, 1768, the thunder of a thousand pieces of ordnance, from the forts and fleets of Zealand, proclaimed the safe delivery of the young Queen, and the birth of a male child."

Had the disappointed maternal feelings of the step-mother been limited in their effect to the somewhat impolitic omission, in her own chapel, of the customary prayers, on this auspicious occasion, and to the lingering hopes founded on the puny sickly frame of the infant heir of Denmark, human nature, perhaps, rather than any special malignity in her own disposition, might have accounted for their existence. But while disposed to reject, as unauthenticated fabrications of party-spirit, many atrocious tales of direct attempts, on the part of Juliana Maria, to remove by poison in infancy, the step-son who came between the throne and her darling child; it is impossible, on such hosts of concurring testimony, to acquit her of efforts (scarcely less criminal) to blight at a maturer period his bodily and mental

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health, and to undermine, by separation and misrepresentation, his chances of domestic happiness.

"It was now the policy of this artful woman to persuade the credulous king to abandon his wife and his dominions to the mercy of the dangerous cabal which she had already formed, under pretence of embellishing his understanding with useful knowledge and instruction by travel and observation, in visiting the principal courts of Europe. She hoped that his absence would entirely extinguish the last sparks of conjugal affection, that no other heirs than the Prince Royal should form a bar to her son's succession; and that the young Queen, thus neglected, would commit some imprudent action, of which the Dowager might wickedly avail herself to censure her conduct and render her virtue suspected. The vivacity, cheerfulness and easy carriage of Matilda, amidst a phlegmatic and reserved nation, formed a happy presage to the success of her enemy's designs; while, except Count Bernstorff, that great statesman whom Christian VII. had continued at the head of affairs, and who had compelled the Queen Dowager to dread his virtue, which she could not corrupt, there was scarcely one among the lords who were to accompany the King, that was not calculated to pervert by his councils an already debauched prince."

The debût in England of the giddy boy is said to have been highly characteristic. Being preceded on his arrival in the royal yacht, the Mary, at Dover, by one of his chamberlains, as an *avant-courier* to announce the landing of the royal Dane, a train of royal carriages and domestics was sent down to convey the King and his numerous suite to London;* but such was his

* Christian VII. was lodged in those apartments in the stable-yard, lately occupied by the Duke of Clarence, and where the King of Prussia

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impatience to see the famed metropolis of Great Britain, that he declined those sumptuous vehicles and travelled in a post-chaise.

Having heard that the clergy and corporation of Canterbury and Rochester intended to receive him with all possible pomp, he was thrown almost into a passion, being averse to formalities of every sort, and accustomed to consider the clergy, as a body, with profligate contempt. He said to Count Bernstorff, "The last King of Denmark who entered Canterbury laid that city in ashes and massacred the inhabitants. Would to God they had recollected this, and let me pass quietly through their venerable town, where our ancestors committed so many crimes!" The Count told him, with a smile, that the good citizens of Canterbury would find less difficulty in forgetting the outrages suffered by their forefathers, than in being deprived of the honour of making him a speech and kissing his royal hand. Finding the ceremony inevitable, he entreated the Count to intimate beforehand his antipathy to long speeches.

In disposition, person, manners, and habits, Christian VII. was the reverse of his cousin and brother-in-law, George III.; whose regularity and dignified demeanour were objects of ridicule to the wild youth and his dissolute associates; and instead of his example reclaiming Christian from vicious conduct, the latter laughed at his cousin's domestic habits, as alike void of elegance and spirit. His errors and vices may, however, claim more than ordinary indulgence, from the pains early taken to eradicate the seeds of virtue from his mind.

was lodged in 1814. When Count Holk, the extravagant and dissipated companion of the King, first saw their *exterior*, he exclaimed, "By Heaven, this will never do; it is not fit to lodge a *Christian!*"

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As the periodical publications of the day present a faithful detail of the festivities and illuminations, balls, concerts, masquerades, military, and nautical spectacles, tours by land, and excursions by water, that took place in England in honour of the young King, and marked the popularity which, in right of his alliance with a British princess, he enjoyed on her native soil, it would be superfluous to go into this fatiguing detail. Among the most sumptuous of these entertainments, the chronicles of the time enumerate those given by the Princess Amelia, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and the Duke of Northumberland, and a princely banquet from the city of London, the very dishes at which have been deemed worthy of record; and the *tout ensemble* of which, with its 2000 wax lights, brilliant decorations, and yet more brilliant galaxy of British beauties, quite dazzled the mind and senses of the boyish guest.

The festivities were wound up by a grand ball, given to Christian by their Majesties of England, (by whom his table during his residence was defrayed, at an expense of 84*l.* per day;) and a far more numerous, if not so select masquerade, given, in return for the civilities he had experienced, by the Danish monarch, at the Haymarket theatre, to 2500 persons of distinction, the greatest number then known to have been assembled on any similar occasion.

Of this royal visit, Horace Walpole, the prince of gossips, thus writes to General Conway.

"The King of Denmark comes on Thursday, and I go up to-morrow to see him. It has cost three thousand pounds to new furnish an apartment for him at St. James's, and they say he will not go thither, supposing it would be a confinement, but is to lie at his own Minister Dieden's. Pray let the Danish King see such

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good specimens as yourself and Lady Aylesbury, of the last age; though by what I hear, he likes nothing but the very present age. You will, no doubt, both come and look at him; not that I believe he is a jot better than the apprentices who flirt to Epsom in a Tim Whisky."

To George Montagu he says:—

"I came to town to see the Danish King. He is as diminutive as if he came out of a kernel in the fairy tales. He is not ill made, nor weakly made, though so small; and though his face is pale and delicate, it is not at all ugly. Still he has more royalty than folly in his air, and considering he is not twenty, is as well as any one expects a King in a puppet-show to be. He arrived on Thursday, supped and slept at St. James's. Yesterday evening he was at the Queen's, and Carlton House, and at night at Lady Hertford's assembly. He only takes the title of *Altesse* (an absurd *mezzo termine*) but acts King exceedingly: struts in the circle like a cock-sparrow, and does the honours of himself very civilly.

"There is a favourite, too, who seems a complete Jackanapes; a young fellow called Holke, well enough in his figure, and about three-and-twenty, but who will be *tumbled down*, long *before he is prepared for it.* Bernstorff, a Hanoverian, his first minister, is a decent sensible man. I pity him, though I suppose he is envied. From Lady Hertford's, they went to Ranelagh; and to-night go to the Opera. There had like to have been an untoward circumstance. The last new Opera in the spring, which was exceedingly pretty, was called *I Viaggiatori Ridicoli,* and they were on the point of acting it for this Royal Traveller!"

To Lord Stafford, a few days later, Walpole thus gossips on:—

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"A royal visitor, quite fresh, is a real curiosity; by the reception of him I do not think any more of the breed will come hither. He came from Dover in hackney-chaises, for somehow or other, the Master of the Horse happened to be in Lincolnshire; and the King's coaches having received no orders, were too good subjects to go and fetch a stranger king of their own heads. However, as his Danish Majesty travels to improve himself, for the good of his people, he will go back extremely enlightened in the arts of government and morality, by having learned that crowned heads may be reduced to ride in hack-chaises."

The coldness and tardiness of reception before alluded to, is thus corroborated by Walpole in the same letter:—

"By another mistake, King George happened to go to Richmond, about an hour before King Christian arrived in London. An hour is exceedingly long, and the distance to Richmond still longer; so with all the dispatch which could possibly be made, King George could not get back to his capital till next day at noon. Then, as the road from his closet at St. James's, to the King of Denmark's apartment, on t'other side of the palace, is about thirty miles (which posterity, having no conceptions of the prodigious extent and magnificence of St. James's, will never believe) it was half an hour after three before his Danish Majesty's cousin could go and return, to let him know that his good brother and ally was leaving the palace (in which they both were) to receive him at the Queen's palace, which you know is about a million of snail's paces from St. James's.

"Notwithstanding these difficulties, and unavoidable delays, Woden, Thor, Frigga, and all the gods that watch over the kings of the north, did bring these two

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invincible monarchs to each other's embraces, about half an hour after five the same evening. They passed an hour in projecting a family compact, that will regulate the destiny of Europe to latest posterity; and then, the Fates so willing it, the British prince departed for Richmond, and the Danish potentate repaired to the widowed mansion of his royal mother-in-law, where he poured forth the fulness of his heart, in praises of the lovely bride she had bestowed upon him, from whom nothing but the benefit of his subjects could have torn him."

After this strain of irony—corroborative it will be perceived, of the hollow footing of the royal brothers-in-law—and some scandalous anecdotes, only too confirmatory of popular rumours as to the foreign one, the lively narrator thus sums up:—

"Well then, this great king is a very little one. He has the sublime strut of his grandfather (or a cock-sparrow), and the divine white eyes of all his family on the mother's side. His curiosity seems to have consisted in the original plan of travelling, for I cannot say he takes notice of anything in particular. The mob adore, and huzza him, and so they did at the first instant. They now begin to know why, for he flings money to them out of the window, and by the end of the week I do not doubt they will want to choose him for Middlesex. His court is extremely well ordered, for they bow as low to him at every word as if his name were Sultan Amurath. You would take his first minister for only the first of his slaves. I hope this example, which they have been good enough to exhibit at the Opera, will civilize us. There is, indeed, a pert young gentleman who a little discomposes this august ceremonial; his name is Count Holke, his age three-and-twenty, and his post answers to one that we had

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formerly in England, ages ago, called in our tongue, a high favourite. Minerva, in the shape of Count Bernstorff (or *out* of all shape in the person of the Duchess of ——) is to conduct Telemachus to York races;—for can a monarch be perfectly accomplished in the mysteries of *king-craft*, unless initiated in the arts of jockey-ship?"

It would have been well, had these amusements, perhaps natural at the age of the boy-king, who was not yet twenty, alone divided his time and heart with those more ostensible objects of his tour, visits to the universities, and chief towns of the kingdom, (some of the former *characteristically* performed in a "hunting coat and boots," on his way to more congenial scenes at York or Newmarket); and all with a breathless rapidity, which forced from even a very courtier-like chronicler the remark that "if His Majesty is not a youth of more than common talent, he must have a very confused idea of what he sees."

"Good-nature," says another, "which is the characteristic of the English nation, made them give the most favourable construction to the motives of the King's travels, which were, in fact, the natural consequence of his giddiness and levity. Whatever he seemed desirous to see, and all the enquiries worthy of a monarch who seeks for instruction, and improvement in arts, civilization and government, were suggested by Count Bernstorff, Secretary of State, the only man of merit and virtue in his retinue. His own inclinations led him to plays, operas, balls, and excursions of pleasure, in which a Sovereign may indulge himself occasionally, as a relaxation from the grand objects of useful study and information. He was gracious and accessible, but without discernment, and without dignity. The very citizens of both sexes, who resorted daily to his

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apartments at St. James's, to see him dine in public with his favourites—mistook him more than once for a young girl, dressed in man's clothes, whose conversation and deportment commanded neither respect nor attention. His confidants were of the same stamp. Count Holke, who, like Narcissus, seemed his own admirer, was a foppish shallow courtier, *sur le bon ton* at the Court of Copenhagen, and highly distinguished by the favour of his master. Molke, his rival in the royal confidence, had less presumption, more dexterity and knowledge of the world than the other, with an equal propensity to pleasure and gallantry. The numerous intrigues into which, even in London, they led their inexperienced master, were of the lowest and most discreditable nature. Nor did the reports of them which reached Copenhagen tend to diminish the disgust of his Queen for her ill-assorted partner.

"Volumes," it is said,—(probably more honoured in their suppression than publication) "might be compiled from the frolics and extravagances committed while in England by this dissipated youth and those servile courtiers, who, to gratify their Sovereign, flattered every folly, and sought with lamentable avidity, even in the paths of infamy and vice, the means of making themselves useful or agreeable." One anecdote alone, of a less exceptionable nature, is given by the Danish writer already quoted; and while illustrative of the reckless profusion* which characterised the King during his residence abroad, is only one of many adventures to which his practice of going out incog. gave rise.

For the better supply of his wants, the King had caused an unlimited credit to be opened with a very

* He used to carry gold coins in one pocket, and silver in the other, which he gave away by handfulls on every occasion.

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rich, but penurious city merchant, under the assumed name of Mr. Frederickson. Dressed as private gentlemen, the King and Count Holke went to the merchant's counting-house, and took up four thousand pounds. The merchant, very desirous of knowing more of such good customers, employed a lad to watch them; but spite of his dexterity, the strangers got off unperceived.

The clerk who had been employed on this service, happening to pass through the palace at St. James's, and seeing the same strangers enter by a private door, was delighted to be told by the sentry, that they *must* belong to the suite of the King of Denmark, as none others were allowed to pass in that way, and communicated his information to his master, who was charmed at the prospect of thus making a handsome profit on the rencontre; while his wife equally bent on obtaining by their means, a view of the King of Denmark, or at least of his apartments, strongly suggested the expediency of inviting them, on their next visit, *to tea.*

This civility the strangers, whom it not a little amused, had succeeded in evading, when the further necessities of the prodigal monarch brought them a second time to the merchant's counting-house; when the merchant, leaving Count Holke in conversation with his wife, took the king, (the supposed Mr. Frederickson) by the lappel of his coat, and led him to a little distance from his companion; and after some cautious circumlocutions, regarding commercial speculations, asked him in direct terms, "if the money was not for the use of Christian the Seventh?" The king thought at first he was detected, but finding that not to be the case, and that the merchant only wanted to get a share of a good thing, he resolved to draw him on, in hopes of amusement, and answered his question in the affirmative.

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The merchant's eyes sparkled with joy at this confession. "I am told," said he "that Christian the Seventh is one of the most extravagant and thoughtless young dogs living, and cares no more for money than if it could be raked out of the kennel. Of course you make him pay handsomely? Eh, you understand me?"

It was with difficulty the King could refrain from laughter; but, as gravely as he could, he told the man of traffic that he had drawn a correct picture of the King's character. "And pray, sir," said the latter, significantly, "what is the nature of your employment?"—"My chief employment," replied Christian, "consists in dressing the King, and looking out for amusements." "Just the thing!" said the merchant; "then you are the more likely to have influence."—"No man has more influence with him than I have; of that be assured." "Then of course you make a handsome thing of those advances?" "Upon my word and honour, I never made a profit on any pecuniary transaction in my life!" The merchant's face fell, considerably lengthened, as he turned his small eyes obliquely towards the King. After a pause, he began on another tack. "How does the King dispose of these sums?"—"Gives them away, sometimes in coin or bank-notes; oftener in presents of jewellery or other precious articles." "Heark'ee, sir," said the merchant, delighted by these confessions; "would you not wish to make the best of your influence with the King?"—"Certainly I would." "Then, if you will suffer me to instruct you, I will teach you how to make fifty per cent. on the capital. Let me buy the jewels and presents." Just at that instant one of the King's pages arrived, and desired the clerk to call his master, who was never less disposed to be interrupted. "Pray, sir," said the messenger, "is not the King of Denmark in your

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house?"—"The King of Denmark! No, sir, only a Mr. Frederickson." "That is the King—the son of Frederick the Fifth; the gentleman with him is Count Holke, master of his Majesty's wardrobe; and I am sent by the Princess Dowager of Wales, and am ordered to deliver this letter into his Majesty's own hands."

The confusion of the merchant and his wife at this *denouement* may safely be left to the imagination. The former disappeared, but the good-natured King, forcing a ring on the fat finger of the latter, and desiring her to tell her husband that Christian would never feel offended at what he had said confidentially to Mr. Frederickson, skipped down stairs, laughing heartily at the adventure, and regretting that it had been so suddenly terminated.

Had the young King's natural levity permitted him to profit by, as well as forgive the warnings he occasionally received during the incognito rambles in which he indulged, one good effect at least might have accrued from the unkingly pastime. It is said, on the same authority on which rests the preceding anecdote, that having gone one evening, in disguise, to a place of resort, much frequented by Danish and Swedish ship-masters, whose conversation naturally turned on the splendid festivities daily given in honour of Christian —— Count Holke, who piqued himself on the purity of his German, asked an old skipper what he thought of his King; and if he were not proud of the honours paid to him by the English? "I think," said he, drily, "that with such counsellers as *Count Holke*, if he escapes destruction, it will be by miracle." "Do you know Count Holke, friend," said he, "that you speak of him thus familiarly?" "Only by report," said the Dane, "but every body in Copenhagen pities the young Queen; attributing the coolness the King showed to her, as he

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set out on this voyage, to the malice of Count Holke." The confusion of the minion may be conceived; while the King, giving the skipper a handful of ducats, bade him "speak the truth, and shame the devil." The moment the King spoke in Danish, the old man knew him, and looking at him with love and reverence, said in a low and subdued tone, "Forgive me, Sire, but I cannot conceal my grief to see you exposed to the temptation of this vast metropolis, under the pilotage of the most dissolute nobleman in Denmark."

Holke's confusion was not a little increased, by the seeming countenance given by the King (who by no means wanted tact and quickness) to the rudeness of the blunt old Dane; and it is added, that the incident (as repeated by Christian to Struensee) laid, notwithstanding the caution in commenting on it of the latter, the first step towards the fall of Holke, and the subsequent, though not immediate, rise of his rival. Struensee, it is said, from this time saw with secret rapture the brilliant path opening to his view; that rapidly led him to the highest pitch of fortune, only to precipitate him the more suddenly to the depth of debasement and misery.

To return to the subject of the Danish monarch's profusion. It was such, that although his brother-in-law supported a table, for himself and his suite, at the cost of five hundred dollars per diem, he got rid, in various ways, of five times that sum; drawing on Hamburgh for more than a hundred thousand dollars per month; which enormous drain of specie was sensibly felt on the exchange of Copenhagen; the more so, as the absence of the King and his principal ministers threw a gloom over the metropolis, and injured trade and commerce. From the sketches already given, it will be conceived that Christian VII. rather scattered

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his treasures than bestowed them; that acting on the impulse of the moment, he gave without discrimination; and it is too probable that from the audacity of impostors, and modesty of suffering merit, the former class of applicants swallowed the greater part of his largesses. But yet, wherever real misery met his eye, his hand went, as it were, spontaneously, into his pocket; and if that chanced to be empty, his ring, his watch, or any other valuable about him, was bestowed instead of money.

He once saw a poor tradesman put into a hackney-coach by two bailiffs, followed by his weeping wife and family, from whom he was about to be torn, and thrown into prison. He ordered Count Molke to follow the coach to the Marshalsea; he paid the debt and costs, and setting the poor man free from every other demand, gave him five hundred dollars to enable him to begin the world anew; and on several other occasions he distributed considerable sums among the poor debtors confined in the different jails of the metropolis. Though indifferent to the pursuits of science, and by no means a warm patron of literature, or the fine arts, he was not insensible to the dramatic superiority of the British stage. Garrick was honoured with an audience, and the King paid homage to his genius by repeating a line from Shakespeare as he presented him with a very valuable snuff-box set with brilliants.

After distributing many other magnificent presents, and taking leave of the King, Queen, and royal family, the King of Denmark, on the 3rd of October, 1768, set off for Dover, where he embarked for Calais, and proceeded to Paris. There he was received with all the *éclat* and magnificence in the power of that voluptuous court to bestow on a Prince who had travelled so far to witness its polish and splendour. Here, the treasures of France and Denmark were poured forth in a mingled

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stream; and fresh reports of her husband's excesses were conveyed from thence to his neglected consort. "As however," she is reported to have said on the occasion, "it was the monarch and not the man whom I received injunctions to marry, the consciousness of having strictly adhered to my duty to His Majesty, and the respect I owe to myself, form a secret satisfaction of which neither malice nor envy can deprive me." Let us hope that in a yet darker and sadder period of domestic trial, the same conviction formed the groundwork of a serenity, and composure, which did not desert her even on the approach of death!

But if even at the moral court of London the conduct of the young King had been such as to give room for scandal, the finishing touch to his already corrupt inclinations was given by the dissolute court atmosphere of France. Paris, the centre of dissipation, frivolity, and gaiety, afforded the King and his attendants but too ready a succession of pleasures suited to their tastes. Ladies of high rank, flattered by the homage of the monarch, while they despised the man, disputed the unenviable notoriety of his attentions; and in the court of Louis XV. immersed in gallantry, Christian found a sanction and example for every excess. The two kings often supped together, *en partie quarrée*, laying aside, in mutual freedom and convivial mirth, all stateliness and majesty. The time fixed for Christian's departure made him lament the fate of royalty; and in taking his leave of the French monarch, he declared Versailles and Paris, under his Majesty's auspices, the favourite abode of Apollo, Venus, and Minerva!*

* The title of Apollo (for which Bacchus would have been an appropriate substitute), and still more of Minerva, to figure in such society, may well amuse as well as mystify the reader. That Diana, at least in her capacity of patroness of the chase, might have occupied the place of

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"The great partiality and manifest influence which the King gave to French connexions during his abode at the court of Versailles, were undoubtedly impolitic; and disclosed that his affinity with the royal family of England did not coincide with his inclinations, or with the system he was directed to pursue. Queen Matilda having been informed that his Majesty had bestowed a regiment of Danish cavalry on the son of the Duke of Duras,* said 'he was a very good Frenchman, but a very

the goddess of wisdom, appears from the following description of a *fête* given to the King of Denmark, at the princely domain of the ancestor of the Duc D'Enghien :—

"The entertainment given to the King of Denmark by the Prince of Condé, at Chantilly, surpassed any other, except that given by the King, our Sovereign. It was on Monday last, the 28th instant. It being *free to all persons*, it is computed that there were at least six thousand present; there went such a prodigious concourse of the nobility and gentry of both sexes to it, that the Rue St. Denis, which is longer than Holborn, was filled with carriages from end to end, insomuch that there was no passage through it. The entertainment continued three days and three nights, during which there was an open house kept for all comers and goers, without exception. There was, likewise, *a most grand hunt* in the forest of Chantilly, by torch-light. After a wild boar had been chased for a good while, he was killed by a nobleman with a bow and arrow."

* Of the important nature of the services by which the Duc de Duras may have earned this *unique* recompense, we may judge from the ludicrous anecdote given by Madame de Crèquy in her "Souvenirs" :—

"Madame de Blot, equally famous for her beauty and affectation, had a little dog, such a favourite, that in her temporary absences, she not only expected her *démoiselle de compagnie* to keep it amused by conversation, but gravely proposed her reading to it a five-act play!

"On this darling, a fat Sacristan from Franche Comté had inadvertently squatted; and having reason to deem the mischief irremediable, ere the faint movements of the animal apprised him of its fate, the wily culprit, by twisting the tail round his hand, and expanding to the utmost his huge person, succeeded in gradually transferring, unobserved, to his pocket, the 'canine favourite' (for 'dog' was a word too vulgar to cross its mistress's lips), and getting rid of it the first opportunity.

"Madame de Blot never knew what had become of her dog; some told her it had been turned into a sylph, and others that, like Hylas, it had been carried off by the nymphs. The wags, however, succeeded in

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bad politician.' This stroke of humour was communicated to him, with many aggravating circumstances, by the emissaries of the Dowager; and on his return to his dominions, unjustly prejudiced against his consort, instead of testifying his joy and fondness at their first meeting, he sought to mortify her by his coolness and indifference. The Queen Dowager, who had gone so far as to insinuate to the King, during his residence in France and England, that the Queen had connexions that were too close with some of her favourites, congratulated him on his return, with all exterior marks of exultation, in the name of all his loyal subjects; wickedly adding, that several of his most faithful nobles had retired to their estates, during his absence, to avoid the insults of some new men admitted to the young Queen's favour. All these false and malicious insinuations alienated the King's affection still more from his amiable consort; who saw herself surrounded with spies, devoted to the sinister designs of an intriguing and perfidious woman.*"

How false and malicious were these accusations, how grossly at variance with truth, as well as with the natural character of one, afterwards goaded by injustice into a line of conduct less prudent and irreproachable, we have happily the testimony of a Danish writer, whose dispassionate tone and general impartiality lend weight to this following pleasing counter-statement.

"During the absence of her giddy lord," writes this author, "Matilda resided principally at the palace of

persuading her that the Duc de Duras, who had been appointed to do the honours of the capital to his Majesty, had had the dog stolen to find favour in the eyes of the *King of Denmark;* and she was on the eve of writing to the latter to beg back her dog, or at least recommend him to the royal protection, when those in the secret interposed."

* Memoirs of an Unfortunate Queen.

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Fredericksborg in the neighbourhood of Copenhagen, and her conduct was free from reproach. Though courted and menaced by conflicting factions, she joined with none; nor showed the least ambition for political power. She appeared to feel a truly maternal affection for her child, and, in spite of remonstrances, had the infant and nurse to sleep in her own apartment. She sometimes visited, and was visited by the Queen Dowager, but lived very retired. She was grown in stature, and appeared much more womanly than when she arrived in Denmark. The glow of robust health was on her cheek; she often nursed her child; and a more interesting object could scarcely be conceived than this lovely and lively young queen playing with her babe.

"During this period of retirement, she visited the houses of the farmers and peasants who resided near the palace; and though she could not converse fluently with these poor grateful people, she gained their warm hearts by her condescension in visiting their cottages, smiling graciously on their wives and daughters, and distributing useful presents. Thus innocently Queen Matilda passed her time, during the travels of her wild and dissipated husband.*"

Considerable obscurity, and discrepancies difficult to reconcile at this distance of time, seem to hang over the political events which ensued immediately on the king's return; and previous to the reconciliation with his consort, by which power was, fatally for her peace, transferred to her hands from those of the Dowager Queen. The most sweeping changes, however, took place in the administration, while the ascendancy in the royal councils still remained with the latter; and are thus narrated, though with probably erroneous views of their exact motives, by the imperfectly informed English biographer of the queen:—

* Danish MS., quoted in "Brown's Northern Courts."

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"Ere long, Queen Juliana, whose desire was to govern alone the King's councils, saw with a jealous eye the high favour in which Count Holke was held, and the confidence with which the King honoured the companions of his travels. By means of secret manœuvres, Counts Holke, Molke, Thott and Reventlow, and Barons de Schimmelmann and de Bulow, with Monsieur Rosencrantz, were disgraced and banished to their estates; after being obliged to quit their employments unpensioned, and without the motives of such an unexpected change being made public."

Other accounts, seemingly worthy of credit, ascribe more naturally to the young Queen the desire at heart to free the King from the influence of his travelling associates; of Count Holke especially, whom she is said to have regarded, and justly, as her greatest enemy. That she possessed at this period, however, any authority to achieve a revolution in the royal household, which, unhappily for her, did not include its most influential, though as yet obscure member, there is, not the smallest reason to believe. Count Holke had, however, excited universal jealousy and disgust, even among the companions of his favour, by his overweening authority over his weak sovereign; and it does not appear that his exile, and that of others of the junto, excited in the nation, either regret or dissatisfaction.

The unhappy prominence in a story, with whose tragic *dénouement*, some seventy years ago, "all Europe rang from side to side"—belongs to the too well-known Count Struensee; known, at least by name, to many, with whom the details of his unparalleled career, and the misfortunes in which he involved himself and others, are matters of dim and distant tradition, rather taken for granted than understood. And yet, a page more prolific in striking incidents, more pregnant

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with salutary warnings, and more linked, by a sad and melancholy interest, with our own history, can scarcely be found in the records of any country. Never, perhaps, was there an age more requiring than the present, to be reminded, from the experience of the past, that even salutary reforms, when dictated by personal aggrandisement, and urged with indiscreet precipitation, tend only to replunge in anarchy the nation whose steady progress towards improvement they retard; that no degree of talent in statesmen can compensate for the absence of moral or religious principle; and that the meteor rise of political adventurers, from a Struensee to a Napoleon, however rapid and brilliant, has generally set in darkness. And since the star of the individual first named, was, alas! not fated to "shoot madly from its sphere" alone, but to draw down from one far more elevated, a being, fitted, but for him, to be its brightest ornament—it may be well for youth and beauty in high places (the highest, thank Heaven! in Britain needs no such warning) to remember, that indiscretion in those thus conspicuous, is ever visited with the imputation, —if not the penalty of crime; that to brave public opinion, is to draw down its infallible reprobation; and to violate dignity and decorum, a false step which no wrongs can palliate, and no bright qualities redeem.

John Frederick Struensee, who (as one of his biographers quaintly but truly remarks) had the honour and misfortune of being prime minister of Denmark under Christian VII., was born in a safe obscurity, which, especially in a country hitherto exclusively governed by nobles, seemed to promise him exemption from the perils of greatness. His father, though afterwards advanced to a bishopric in Holstein, was a poor but highly respectable country clergyman, whose early lessons of piety (through life unfortunately

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disregarded by his son) were gratefully acknowledged in the hour of death, and by whom that son's elevation, so far from being matter to him of pride or exultation, was bitterly deplored. He was born, 5th August, 1737, and received his first education in the celebrated Orphan House of Dr. Franke at Halle; the somewhat ascetic strictness of which * he willingly exchanged at the age of fourteen, for the more congenial liberty of the university of the same city. Ambition and love of pleasure, his two ruling passions, henceforth divided his time and thoughts; though the former had as yet no higher aim than that of qualifying himself by assiduous studies for success in the profession of medicine, which, on leaving the university, he practised with skill and reputation at Altona. So nearly had he chalked out for himself a course of life, the very antipodes of the one in which he became fatally celebrated, that infirm health, an insatiable desire of distinction in his art, and above all, the luxurious gratifications held out by an eastern climate, had determined him on a voyage to India; when (drawn in a contrary direction by the same dominant motives,) the pursuit of a love-intrigue carried him to Copenhagen, where chance recommended him to the notice of the King.

"From his first entering the country," says a sketch, the fidelity of which, as based on his own conversations, and attested by unimpeachable authority, is deserving of all credit, "he had resolved to act a distinguished

* It may be useful to those engaged in the training of youth, to mention, that Struensee ascribed much of the profligacy of his after-life to the criminality attached by his early instructors, to comparative trifles; by which the distinctions of right and wrong were obscured in his mind. They told him that it was a sin to wear powder and ruffles; and observing these fashions, nevertheless, to be generally adopted, he persuaded himself that the moral delinquencies, held up to not much severer reprobation, were equally venial, and as universally practised.

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part, and was raised in 1768 to the rank of physician to his Majesty, and in that quality appointed to attend him during his tour in visiting several of the courts of Europe. Being then in the flower of life, possessing an agreeable person and attractive manners, he soon insinuated himself into the good graces of his royal master, and secured that uncommon degree of court-favour which paved the way to all his subsequent preferments.

"He accompanied the King to England, where, in compliment to the official character he held, the University of Oxford conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Medicine. While at Paris he formed an intimacy with Ernevold Brandt, a Dane of good family, who afterwards became the associate of his crimes and his public delinquencies, and a fellow-sufferer with him on the same block." Count Brandt, whose name has thus become inseparably blended with that of Struensee, was of a more elevated extraction. His family, though not noble, was very respectable, originally from Holstein, where his ancestors were established. He possessed many qualities calculated to advance their possessor in a court. His manners were polished, his address easy, and his conversation lively, as well as amusing. Throughout his life, no less than in his death, he manifested personal courage; but in principle and virtue he was totally deficient.

Among the favourites of Christian VII., who were the companions of his pleasures, Brandt occupied a distinguished place; and he was commonly selected from among the crowd of courtiers to make one of the party at the King's private suppers. Having been appointed a gentleman of the bedchamber, he flattered himself that he should be placed on the list of those whom his Danish Majesty named to accompany him on his intended travels. It was not, therefore, without

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equal surprise and mortification, that Brandt found his name excluded. He attributed his rejection to the enmity and insinuations of the young Count Holke, who had supplanted him, as he conceived, in his sovereign's favour. Stung with a preference so injurious to his views, Brandt endeavoured to procure the disgrace of Holke, by means of an anonymous letter addressed to the King, accusing the favourite of disaffection. But the attempt proved ruinous to himself; the latter having been soon traced to its real author, Brandt received an order to quit Copenhagen within twenty-four hours. He obeyed, and retired to Paris, where he remained in obscurity as well as indigence. When the King of Denmark arrived at that city, Brandt found means to represent his poverty, and obtained from his master a present of an hundred louis d'or.

Struensee, meanwhile, had accompanied Christian VII. on his travels. He and Brandt meeting at Paris, they formed a sort of compact, by which it was agreed that if Struensee, on his return to Denmark, should attain sufficient credit at court, he would use it to obtain the recall of the other. During the King's stay in France, Struensee had risen to a considerable degree of favour; and his Majesty, soon after his arrival at Copenhagen, presented him to the Queen with his own hand; recommending him at the same time to her as a man of talents, and as peculiarly skilled in the profession of medicine. He was promoted immediately to the place of a privy councillor, and soon became as acceptable to the Queen as he had been to her husband.

Reasons of a very delicate and peculiar nature facilitated his progress in that princess's good opinion. The King and she having been alienated from each other in consequence of his excesses, and having ceased to live together, Struensee undertook to reconcile them, and

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succeeded in the attempt. He received every day, from both, new marks of consideration and regard. Together with his friend Brandt, now recalled through his interest from exile, and restored to his former office, he was elevated to the dignity of a count. He now stood forth publicly, the declared and confidential favourite of the King; and within a very short space was constituted first minister, with almost unlimited political power.

This rapid, and altogether unprecedented elevation of a man of obscure birth, and a foreigner,* created, as was to be supposed, feelings of envy and disgust among the courtiers and nobility; who were indignant at the marked preference shown to a stranger, and an upstart. "It was undoubtedly," says a contemporary writer (decidedly favourable to the cause of the young Queen) "an impolitic step in the King to create Doctor Struensee a Count of Denmark, the highest title of nobility in his kingdom; and after having made him the equal to its nobles, to raise him above competition, as his prime minister, with power never delegated before to a Dane. He was revered and esteemed as a physician and a scholar; but when he became the representative of a King, whose person he had surrounded by court sycophants, all Struensee's abilities were exerted to maintain his important post against the batteries of female revenge and perfidy, without attempting to silence his enemies by those masterly strokes which characterise a statesman, and confound all the little devices of the ambitious, forced to admire what it is their interest to satirise and ridicule.†"

"In the important office, however, to which he was so unexpectedly raised," writes another dispassionate narrator, "the Count showed himself to be a man of

* The natives of Holstein were so regarded by the indigenous Danes.

† Memoirs of an Unfortunate Queen.

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unquestionable abilities; and far beyond what might have been augured from his habits and inexperience. His powers of application were great; he was rapid and decisive in his resolutions, as well as enlarged and patriotic in his views. Many of his public measures were calculated to improve, and to aggrandise the state over which he presided; although others of them were unadvised, illiberal, and unpopular. Though well-meant, his policy was often ill-judged, and easily misled by insidious adversaries. His impetuosity sometimes impelled him to rash counsels, and reckless legislation; braving prejudices, which greater mildness or prudence would have disarmed, and offending interests that might have been easily reconciled. He irritated the military by disbanding the regiments of guards—a measure which, though professedly founded on economy, weakened his own authority by throwing the satellites of arbitrary power into the ranks of his enemies. He excited the just resentment of the nobility by the suppression of the Privy Council; and by repealing a very ancient law inflicting capital punishment on adultery, he raised against him the clamorous indignation of the people; who regarded this step, and perhaps not without reason, as a mark of his approbation of vice, and an inlet to licentiousness. Some of his improvements, however, were laudable and excellent, and it ought not to be forgotten that he was the first minister of an absolute monarch, that abolished the torture. He interested himself to obtain freedom for the enslaved husbandmen, and granted to all religious denominations the free exercise of their worship. He erected a royal hospital for veteran and invalid soldiers, encouraged agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, and exempted from censure all literary productions."

These measures, however far in advance of his age

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and country, were unquestionably of a nature to challenge for their author the respect of posterity, had his moral character not been "far more exceptionable than his political; and his private licentiousness the secret spring of several legislative measures, which were not only disgraceful and odious in themselves, but the forerunner of that indignation and infamy which at last overwhelmed him, and terminated his eventful and infatuated career. Profligacy and ambition were the rocks on which he split. In a court immersed in dissipation and criminal pleasures of every kind, he stood forth the avowed patron, and guilty partaker, of every fashionable vice. At masked balls, and other foreign amusements of that sort, then first introduced into the Danish metropolis, he was the gay leader and infatuated promoter of whatever tended to foster or encourage the dark artifices of gallantry and intrigue."* Infatuated indeed! may we exclaim, who know that it was the opportunity afforded by one of these scenes of novel dissipation, which was successfully embraced to hurl from his "bad eminence" their reckless introducer!

"In his disposition," pursues the same writer, "he was generous, frank, and without hypocrisy; but deficient in that profound judgment, that unwearied vigilance, and political sagacity which were necessary for maintaining him in his precarious elevation. These deficiencies became more and more apparent in proportion as the difficulties of his situation increased. Towards the close of his ministry, when his enemies were become numerous, powerful, and implacable, his strength and presence of mind seemed to have forsaken

* Author of the abridged Life of Struensee in the "Lives of Eminent Converts."

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him, and his conduct in many instances, betrayed a strange absence of all foresight or address."

Perhaps it might have been deemed more strange still—more foreign to the recognised weakness of human nature, had the possession of unlimited power, and the boundless favour of two sovereigns, (united upon no other point), failed to intoxicate, and blind to the precipice on which he stood, a quondam physician of five-and-thirty; whom five short years before had seen, editing a newspaper for bread, and meditating, in the hope of some favourable chance in his profession, expatriation across the globe! To what save his own merits, real or supposed, (or a star which defied change), could this minion of fortune ascribe an elevation, beyond his wildest dreams; crowned, too, as it unhappily was, with the confidential intimacy, and too favourable consideration, of an amiable and accomplished Queen?

For this intimacy, and this consideration, there were not wanting, at its commencement, natural and abundant reasons. At the period of the King's return from his travels, the situation of his unfortunate consort, (a beautiful and admired woman be it remembered, little more than nineteen), is thus described:—

"The attachment of the King, if ever it deserved the name, thus alienated, partly in consequence of his own excesses, and partly from the rival jealousies of court parasites, had subsided from cold formality into cruel disrespect. He did not treat her even with common civility; and allowed her to be publicly insulted, in her own palace, by the Russian minister at Copenhagen. His resentment fell on all who were guilty of taking her part; and his favourite cousin, the Prince of Hesse, was disgraced for no other crime."

"Such was the condition of this neglected and ill-fated Queen when Struensee entered on his adminis-

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tration. By his insinuating address he soon gained her confidence, and from pity or gallantry, took an interest in her sufferings. His influence over the listless monarch was the means of restoring her to his good graces; although this desirable reconciliation proved the harbinger of his own ruin, by furnishing his enemies with plausible reasons of attack."

Whoever dispassionately considers that this reconciliation, however little "desirable" in itself, and fatal, perhaps, in its consequences to both, was entirely due to Struensee; and elevated for a time the princess whom his chivalry had befriended, from the most abject state of neglect and contumely, to her legitimate influence with her husband, and a triumph which could not fail to be dear to woman's heart, ovér her relentless persecutors, will not be tempted to wonder, that female gratitude should assume the guise of overweening partiality; and that, towards the only man, perhaps, at the Court of Denmark, by whom her accomplishments were appreciated, or her character understood. One too, presented to her as a talented adviser, by the very hand of her reconciled husband, who never, whether from increasing apathy, or confidence in his wife's virtue, betrayed the smallest jealousy or disapprobation of their intercourse; with whom she was accustomed to hold frequent consultations on the health of her beloved little son; and who excelled, unfortunately for the peace and reputation of both, in the lighter exercises of riding and dancing, in which a young creature of twenty, (for she was no more), might be pardoned for indulging.

But innocent in themselves as were the latter recreations, and natural, nay, praiseworthy, as was the former sentiment, there was much in the modes of enjoying the one, and manifesting the other, which, while it afforded a cruel scope for the insinuations, nay, calum-

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nies, of indignant enemies, gave rise in many a friendly bosom, at the time, and long years after, to regrets that a princess, so highly gifted and essentially amiable, should have suffered the polluted atmosphere she had early and fatally breathed, so far to blunt the inherent delicacy of an Englishwoman, as not only to ride in well nigh masculine attire, (a fashion not unexampled in some northern countries,) attended by the Count, and to dance with him whole evenings together,* but to permit him to assume towards her, in public, an ostentation of intimacy, such as, even if proceeding from the recklessness of conscious innocence, was, at least, a violation of dignity and decorum, in which no "wife of Cæsar" could with impunity indulge.

"When Queen Matilda rode out a hunting, her attire too much resembled a man's. Her hair was pinned up closer than usual; she wore a dove-coloured beaver hat, with a gold band and tassels; a long scarlet coat, a frilled shirt, and a man's cravat, while from beneath the coat was said to peep a more unfeminine appendage still, too much in keeping with the terminating spurs. That she made a noble figure, mounted on a majestic steed, and dashing through the woods after the chase, her cheeks flushed with health and violent exercise, may readily be conceded."

"Queen Matilda," says another authority, "was a resolute and fearless horsewoman; of this she gave a decided though indiscreet proof within three days of the birth of her daughter, the Princess Louisa, on the 4th of July, 1771, when, being out on horseback, the horse plunged and kicked, and backed into a dry ditch,

* The stately and measured dances of the period, however, be it remembered, and not the less dignified and more exciting ones of modern times. "Her Majesty," it is said by a cotemporary, "walked the first minuet at the Court of Denmark."

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while the Queen, sitting firm and undismayed, flogged and spurred the restive animal till she conquered, and rode home unhurt."

It was probably to enhance this command over her horse, and to indulge with more convenience and security her passion for hunting, adopted originally to counteract a tendency to *embonpoint*, that, in an evil hour for her happiness and reputation, Carolina Matilda assumed the unfortunate garb on horseback, which, though common among the farmers' wives and daughters, was hitherto unprecedented in a higher grade, and gave great and general offence. "Indeed," says the same writer, "her unfeminine appearance,* thus attired for the chase, did her, perhaps, more injury in public opinion, among the elegant and cultivated of her own sex, than her indiscreet preference for the society of the companion of her rides; a proof that, in an age of artificial delicacy, a supposed want of morals may sooner hope for pardon than a failure in decorum."

Gladly do we pause before entering on more harrowing details, and as a contrast to the unbecoming costume above alluded to, to bring before the eyes of the reader—as an almost identical original† has, during a lifetime, familiarised to the writer of these pages the lineaments of their royal subject—the following description, from a Danish novel, of the pictures preserved in Denmark of their now endeared and lamented Queen :—

* That it found imitators, however, even among the censors, appears from a passage in a letter of Colonel Keith. "*An abominable riding habit*, with a black slouched hat, has been *almost universally introduced here;* which gives every woman the air of an awkward *postilion*. In all the time I have been in Denmark, I never saw the queen *out* in any other garb."

† Presented by the royal victim, after her exile, to Sir R. M. Keith, the British minister, to whom she owed her rescue. The execution is indifferent, owing, probably, to the inferiority of the artist.

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"Over a marble table hung a portrait in a broad gilt frame. It represented a lady in a dress of bluish satin, embroidered with gold, and edged with lace; the sleeves and puffs over the full bosom being of brownish brocade. Round her neck was a closely strung necklace of pearls, and similar rings were in the ears. The hair was turned up and powdered: it occupied a height and breadth which, agreeably to the fashion of the times, exceeded that of the whole face, and was decorated with a gold chain, enamels, and jewels, entwined with a border of blonde, which hung down over one ear. The face was oval, the forehead high and arched; the nose delicately curved, the mouth pretty large, the lips red and swelling; the eyes large and of a peculiarly light-blue, mild, and at the same time *serious, deep,* and *confiding*. I could describe the entire dress, piece by piece, and the features *trait by trait;* but in vain should I endeavour to convey an idea of the peculiar expression, the amiable loftiness, or lofty amiableness, which beamed from that youthful face, the freshness of whose colour I have never seen surpassed. It needed not to cast your eye upon the purple mantle, bordered with ermine, which hung carelessly over the shoulder, to discover in her a queen! She could be nothing of inferior rank. This the painter, too, had felt, for the border of the mantle was so narrow as almost to be overlooked. It was as though he meant to say, 'This woman would be a queen without a throne!'

"A higher title was conferred on his long dead mistress by an old Court Chamberlain, who, looking on the picture, said—'That was an angel!'"

Thus wrote, a number of years ago, and while many (like the Court Chamberlain above alluded to) survived to verify his accuracy, the Danish author of a book,

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professedly entitled "Old Recollections;"* which created, at the period of its appearance, "considerable sensation in Denmark, where," adds the correspondent who thus mentions it, "the Danes still cling with affectionate regard to the memory of the lovely being thus portrayed."

Who, indeed, can contemplate the picture of softened majesty, and winning grace, which pen and pencil have combined to hand down to us, and not cling to the cheering conviction, that the blots which cast their invidious shade over so fair a specimen of humanity, must owe the chief part of their depth to the rancour of envy, and envenomed virulence of faction? And while they have been atoned for by sufferings, more than adequate to their full expiation—their utter want of keeping and harmony with the gentle and reserved character ascribed to Carolina Matilda by some Danish historians, and still more with the qualities which dignified her life, and hallowed her death, at Zell—must ever incline us to view with charitable distrust, that "scandal about Queens," (whether yclept Elizabeth or Matilda) which that chief of gossips, History, is so apt to keep fast hold of, and hand down, when more valuable matter floats unheeded on the stream.

There was, perhaps, no Court in Europe where more respect was shown to foreign ministers, or their convenience more studied than in Denmark. At Hirschholm,† two days in the week, they dined at the King's or rather the *Queen's* table. On their return from the drawing-room to their respective apartments, they found a ticket on their dressing table, specifying where they were to dine; some at the King's table, others

* The one translated into German, as "Christian VII.," and in English as the "Queen of Denmark.

† Literally the Isle of Stags, a country palace, some miles from the capital.

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at the Lord Chamberlain's, in the chamber called the Rose.

The usual number that sat down to dinner at the King's table was twelve; alternately five ladies and seven gentlemen, seven ladies and five gentlemen. The King cut a wretched figure on these occasions; not so the Queen, who dressed very superbly, and made a noble and splendid appearance. The King and Queen were served on gold plate by noble pages; the marshal of the palace sat at the foot of the table, the chief lady of the household at the head: the company, a lady and gentleman alternately, opposite to the King and Queen.

A table of eighty covers was provided every day in the Rose, for the great officers of state, who were served on silver plate: at this table Struensee, Brandt, with their friends and favourites, male and female, used to dine.

Of the palace where these costly banquetings were daily carried on, we possess two various descriptions written at the interval of perhaps a dozen years, and so characteristic in their contrast, of the vicissitudes in the fate of their royal mistress, that a part of both may be given here. At the period of the festivities just alluded to, and when "all went merry as a marriage-bell" with the actors in them, the splendors of Hirschholm are thus portrayed:—

"Each period and taste in building might find its type among the palaces of Denmark; but the representative of that culminating point of luxury and magnificence, the Siècle de Louis Quatorze, was to be found at Hirschholm. Adorned externally with all the newest French refinements in gardening and pleasure-grounds, it dazzled the eye within, by the profusion of solid silver, intermingled with mother of pearl, and rock

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crystal; with which not only pictures and looking-glasses, but even the very pannels of the audience chamber were prodigally encircled." Such was it in 1772.

Coxe, writing in 1784, says, "The suite of apartments at Hirschholm is princely, but deserted and without furniture; not having been inhabited since the exile of Queen Carolina Matilda, who made it her favourite residence. The place is so entirely neglected, that the court-yard is overrun with weeds, and the moat a green-mantled pool."

A later writer still, speaks of the palace itself as having vanished; and its site being occupied (as if by way of monument to past splendours) by a little unadorned village church.

Whilst Struensee was lord of the ascendant, the King was held in a sort of liberal restraint, debarred from the society and intercourse of every one, save those placed about him by the minister.* Yet during all this time he dined in public with the Queen, accompanied her in the field sports, to which she became so much addicted, appeared at the French and Italian operas, danced at their balls, and took a share in their card parties; but little if any attention was paid to what he said, except so far as his wants were concerned; and all the subaltern attendants and domestic servants had orders never to speak to the King.

One Sunday, coming from the royal chapel, the King turned the wrong way, and lost himself in the vast passages of his enormous palace; seeing Struensee's

* This restriction, the result, of course, of jealous caution, extended, it will be seen, to the person of the British minister; who wishing to convey in a familiar letter the king's character and state of mind, to his sister, applied, (under a feigned name), the expressive Scotch terms of "*catwitted*" and "*cowed*" to the unhappy monarch.

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valet, he asked him in a mild and melancholy tone, to show him the way to his apartment. This person, a young, handsome, gay Norwegian, and a favourite and humble confidant of his master, respectfully, but in profound silence, complied with the monarch's request, and led him to his magnificent prison.

The same despotic restrictions are said to have existed with regard to the infant Crown Prince; and tales of arbitrary imprisonment for having merely picked him up when he had fallen, were studiously circulated by the enemies of the Queen and Struensee. That the latter had become an object of aversion to the child (no doubt from persons having, in spite of all precautions, taught him to dislike and despise one whom he persisted in calling not "Count" or "Excellency," but the "nasty Doctor,") rests on the same popular authority: and, if true, would afford sufficient ground for the care taken to isolate him from such communications. But a worthier reason may be found in the truly excellent, and at that time rare system of education, which was adopted at the avowed suggestion of Struensee, by the Queen; and acted upon with a firmness which—however misrepresented into severity by the malice of cruel foes—must have cost so tender a parent the most commendable effort. The moral training—so rare in the case of an heir-apparent,—is thus described; and to its early influence may perhaps be ascribed, at least in some degree, the mixture of moderation and self-restraint with the firm assertion of his just rights, which distinguished the youthful monarch, at a future, though still boyish period.

"Under Struensee's directions, the young prince was treated in a very hardy manner. A companion was assigned him, a soldier's child, whose name was

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Edward. This boy too was called a *prince*; he was dressed in the same plain uniform as the Crown Prince, ate of the same dish with him, and slept on the same mattress. This experiment was made with a view to repress, in his earliest years, those exalted notions of self-importance, and aversion to self-control, that had proved so fatal to his unhappy father; and it seems to have answered its intended object, as our present beloved King is universally acknowledged as the least haughty or assuming of sovereigns." *

This pair of little men, the pseudo and born prince, frequently contended for mastery. One day, when they had fought with greater fury than usual, Frederick asked Edward how he dared to raise his hand against *his* prince? "A prince," replied the other,—"I am a prince as well as you." "Yes, but I am *Crown* Prince," rejoined Frederick, and fell upon him again, after he had owned himself conquered. Matilda, hearing of this, had the little urchin sent for to her apartment, as well as his companion, insisting that he should beg pardon of Edward. Frederick refused to submit to her award, and the Queen, provoked by his stubbornness, beat him severely: he was conquered, but not subdued.

That by these "*severities*," doubtless little practised in royal nurseries, Matilda *alienated* the affections of her boy, is utterly disproved by the tender fondness with which, through life,† he clung to her memory.

* This account is taken from a Danish MS. Since these pages were written, two monarchs, subsequently to the one so justly praised, have ascended the Danish throne.

† Towards the close of his long reign, chance having thrown the writer of these pages into the company of a Danish *savant*, travelling at the expense of the king, with whom he was in close correspondence; he exclaimed on hearing the name of '*Keith*,' "I must write of this meeting to my *good king before I sleep*, he will be *so happy!*"

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Nor would any mother, in our more enlightened days of maternal discipline, shrink from the inferences, founded by ignorance or malice on the circumstance, that when *very unruly*, it was sufficient to threaten to *take him to the Queen.* The well-meaning, though ill-judging writer, who repeats this gossip, candidly subjoins to it—"The probability is, that to the system thus introduced, this prince is indebted for the strength he afterwards acquired: as previously, he was a weakly puny child; very cross and humoursome, continually crying; would not walk, but cried till he was carried, so that at two years old, his attendants, to make him quiet, used to tell him—'Your mama shall come to you.'"

"To obviate these hindrances to the development of his health and intellects, Struensee, with the approbation of the Queen, made a total change in the child's regimen. His food thenceforth was of the most plain and simple description, such as bread, rice, fruits, milk, and vegetables, all cold; he was bathed in cold water two or three times each week, till at last he would go of himself to the bath. The boys were very lightly clad, and last winter had neither shoes, stockings, nor fire in their room. The Crown Prince and his comrade played together; in dressing and eating, they assisted each other, and the apartment being free from anything by which they could injure themselves, if they fell, there they lay, till they got up by their own exertions, no one showing any concern.

"After the introduction of this system, the Crown Prince was seldom ill; he had the small-pox from inoculation slightly, and also the measles. His education was to commence in his sixth year, prior to which, he was left to the effects of his experience, temperate diet and exercise. He had acquired as much knowledge as could be expected from his tender years,

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his health was improved, his temper and bad habits corrected; and the utmost care was taken that his infant mind should not be inflated with vanity by adulation. It redounds to the honour of Struensee, that his enemies actually made this admirable system a capital charge against him, as endangering not only the health, but life of the prince."

The political features of this ominous period of nominal resumption of authority by the King, and its uncontrolled exercise by the dominant party, are thus characterised by a contemporary writer:—

"The young Queen endeavoured, during this interval of Christian's assuming the reins of government, to prevent the baneful effects of Juliana's designs, by forming a new Court of creatures, mostly strangers, without fortune, credit or alliances in the state; intriguing without being politicians, assuming in prosperity, and relying too much on a transient power, unsupported by family connections, and envied by the late discarded favourites as well as by those who pleaded a noble Danish extraction, for the preference they claimed against those new men, whose talents, inadequate to public administration, gave too much room for their adversaries' complaints and animadversions."*

By one ambitious individual among these, was the favourite minister's influence viewed with rising, though secret, jealousy and displeasure. And it forms one of the not least ominous features, in an unparalleled series of events, that Struensee should have been originally placed near the King as a spy on a former obnoxious minion, by the man, afterwards destined to be the chief agent in his ruin, and that of the unfortunate Carolina Matilda.

Count Charles Shack Rantzau, Governor of Gluck-

* Memoirs of an unfortunate Queen.

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stadt, a general in the army, a Knight of the Order of the Elephant, the head of one of the most powerful families under the Danish crown, has, like all the chief actors in extensive revolutions, been characterised by the various parties, with a discrepancy of opinion, which must baffle the efforts of distant posterity to arrive at a just conclusion. But however his motives, and the actions to which they led, may have given rise to even opposite representations, on the main points of his character all are agreed. Handsome in person, generous to profusion, a brave officer, (though his courage had chiefly displayed itself in the unenviable notoriety of duelling), and an accomplished courtier, he was in morals utterly dissolute; and his political principles—if such they may be called—partook so largely of the mingled astuteness and versatility of those ascribed to the prince of diplomatists, Talleyrand, that a piece (entitled *Bertrand et Raton*)—in which the treacheries and tergiversations of the latter were satirised under the name of the former dabbler in revolutions, drew all Paris to the theatre, during an unprecedented run of an hundred and sixty successive nights.

We say "dabblers in *revolutions*," because Count Rantzau had in earlier life gained unenviable notoriety by his participation in that which placed Catherine of Russia on the throne; and it was singular that the same man who, it is said, by betraying the unhappy Peter the Third, assisted her design of getting rid of one imbecile husband, should, by the instrumentality of another, accomplish the ruin of a princess far more deserving than she whose ambition he served.*

* In a letter to his father, Sir R. Keith indirectly corroborates this, by saying of Count Rantzau, soon after his arrival at Copenhagen, "He claims acquaintance with you at Petersburgh; but this does not shield him from the unmitigated contempt I owe him."

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Count Rantzau, it is asserted in the accounts most favourable to his original motives and character, had been the intimate friend and chosen confidant of the late King Frederick V.; and aware of the probable machinations of Juliana Maria, had promised her dying husband, on his honour and oath, never to desert his favourite boy, Christian. It is, therefore, allowable to presume that he might feel, and exercise, a disinterested solicitude to fulfil this sacred trust, in his first efforts to rescue from the influence of the minions by whom he was surrounded, his degraded monarch. That personal ambition, and hopes of future elevation to political power through his means, had their share in his choice of Struensee to be about the King's person, there can, however, be not the shadow of a doubt; while the bloody termination of a connection, founded on congenial laxity of morals and principle, connected by interest and dissolved at the bidding of self-aggrandisement, reads an impressive lesson to all, who, in "sowing the wind" of mere political combinations for selfish purposes, may expect to "reap the whirlwind" of perfidy, desertion, and disgrace.

"Not long after the wasteful and impolitic tour to England, France, &c., the Court went on a journey to Holstein and Sleswick, during which the King and Queen paid a visit to Count Rantzau at his principal country residence, Aschberg.* The mansion was neither

* The family of Rantzau was one of the most distinguished in Holstein, not only for the antiquity and extent of their possessions, but for the number of warriors and statesmen it produced. The gardens at Aschberg were as much celebrated in that country as those of Stowe in England. In the centre was a conical hill, perhaps an ancient tumulus, round which a spiral walk led to the summit. The mount was planted with *ash trees;* and '*berg*' signifying a mountain, the name of the estate was probably derived from this mount, where there was a fine view over a lake, eight miles in breadth, diversified by woody islands

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very large nor magnificent. The old edifice was much in the style of gentlemen's houses in England of the seventeenth century; the new house, as it was called, was connected with the ancient structure, and consisted of a suite of four tolerable rooms on the ground floor, and as many above. This building was allotted to the King and Queen, and their principal courtiers, as Brandt, Struensee, &c."

It was the opportunities that this Holstein journey, and the residence of the Court at his house, afforded to the Count, of observing the conduct of Struensee and the Queen, that convinced him he had introduced an agent who would soon tower high above himself, and probably kick down the ladder by which he had been raised. His suspicions once awakened, his fears were confirmed to an extent which eradicated every feeling of friendship towards Struensee, and in its place implanted those deadly emotions of jealousy and hatred which, at no very distant day, led to the destruction of their incautious object.

During the residence of the Court at the Count's mansion, he one day found means, in spite of the vigilance of Brandt and Struensee, to obtain an hour's conversation with the King. Count Rantzau knew his weakness too well to commit himself in any way; all he wished was to ascertain the state of the King's mind, who, pleased with the puerile amusements that were provided, seemed perfectly indifferent to everything else. Rantzau gazed on the debilitated being before him, with looks fraught with more meaning than words, and a tear trickled down his furrowed cheek. The King

and picturesque shores. At a small distance stood a tolerable inn, where the domestics of the King and his nobles were lodged; and which in summer was generally full of company from Hamburgh, &c., who were attracted by the beauties of Aschberg.

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seemed affected; for a moment the former sensibility and vivacity of his character illumined his dimmed eye and pallid cheek. He seized the Count by the hand and said, "You were a true friend to my father, you will never be an enemy to me." "Never, sire! never will I hesitate to sacrifice my life in your defence!" Then, falling on one knee, he drew an antique ring from his finger and put it on the King's, saying, in a solemn manner, "This ring, sire, was given me by your royal father when I returned from Russia, and when, by fortunate exertions there, I was the humble means of averting invasion from his kingdom. If ever your majesty thinks yourself in danger, and you want the assistance of Rantzau, send this ring to me, and I will fly on the wings of affection and loyalty to your aid."

Rantzau had scarcely wiped the falling tear away, ere the King, hearing footsteps approach, fell off at once into his idiotic state, and running to a canine friend of his that was basking in the sun, took him round the neck, hugging him with ardour, and calling him his faithful guard. This uncommon dog was liver-coloured, of prodigious might and size; his broad chest showed all the strength of the English mastiff; his form the elegance of the greyhound. Such was the King's favourite dog, called *Gourmand*. Gourmand had a carriage for his sole use when the King travelled, and a lacquey to attend him. He was served with food from the King's table, and by his royal master's hand. In the midst of royal etiquette, Gourmand alone acted without restraint, though generally with distinguished decorum. He would, when he pleased, stretch his finely-formed limbs on the same rich sofa where his master reclined, and then no one durst approach till he awoke. He was playful, docile, and *incorruptibly* faithful

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to his master; the only one of all the King's attendants, of whom so much might be said with any regard to historical truth. The partisans of Queen Juliana, in derision of Struensee's new-born honours, dubbed this four-legged favourite of their sovereign, "Monsieur Gourmand, *Conferentie Raad*" (privy councillor) to the King, and, as if to confirm his title to the epithet, the faithful animal (who, it was said, had once leaped on and seized an intended assassin) was involved in the fall of Struensee, and after that event removed from the King and returned to the nobleman by whom he had been originally presented.

The above anecdote, which, without vouching for its authenticity, is, like many similar ones, given on the authority of an anonymous Danish MS. of the period, quoted in a work entitled "Brown's Northern Courts," derives confirmation, in so far as the imbecile monarch's sudden change of demeanour goes, from the observations of a lady of rank who visited the Danish Court in the year 1796, twenty-four years after the events just narrated. She thus writes:—

"Although incapable of governing when I visited Copenhagen, Christian VII. had frequent lucid intervals, and even held Courts occasionally; for the Crown Prince, who was then Regent, paid every attention which filial affection could dictate, to the wants and wishes of his parent. I had the honour of being present at one of these levées, and was much struck by the venerable appearance of the monarch, as well as the marked homage and respect with which he was treated by the whole Court. The return of his malady evinced itself in a singular manner. While in the midst of the most cheerful conversation, and when, apparently, quite collected, he would suddenly run across the apartment, and salute the first person he met with

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a violent slap on the face; so that it was necessary for the courtiers and ministers (for he made no distinction of rank or person) to be constantly on their guard."

To return to the narration of occurrences at Aschberg, and the mute appeal of the poor King to his canine guardian, whence Rantzau drew the inference that he apprehended some impending danger, "it would be difficult," says the writer before quoted, "to conceive a more distressing spectacle than that presented to a contemplative mind, in the wreck of this gay young monarch, now become an object of fixed aversion to his wife, and of secret scorn to his own menials. Enfeebled as he was in mind and body, he had yet sufficient consciousness to feel at intervals all the misery of his degraded condition; though he wanted resolution of mind to quit those disgraceful excesses by which it was produced.

"During the stay of the Court at Aschberg, Count Rantzau spared no pains or expense to render his abode agreeable to the young Queen. Each day had its peculiar festivities and amusements, music, hunting, fishing, sailing on the lake, and rustic sports, which, more than any pastime, pleased the imbecile King.*

"The Queen, fully satisfied with the magnificence and respect with which Count Rantzau had entertained her, little dreaming of the share which her attentive host was to have in her approaching fall, gave him a

* Of the scale and splendour of these entertainments some idea may be formed from the account of the parting one, which, when a disgraced courtier, and about to become a voluntary exile, the Count gave on the same estate. After conferring on his vassals some really valuable privileges, he "invited them to his castle, and gave them such a substantial feast as the English Barons of old are said to have displayed. Tents and marquees were provided for the accommodation of the higher classes; a rustic fair was held, that was crowded with bands of music, players, and venders of all sorts of bagatelles."

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superb snuff-box, richly set with brilliants, that had cost her husband a thousand guineas, in London.* Count Rantzau followed the Court in its progress; in his mind he anticipated, more than all, the sad results which flowed from the imprudence of Matilda and Struensee; but keeping these thoughts to himself, and his countenance open, he eluded the vigilance of Struensee, Brandt, and even the lynx-eyed Madame G——. All the party, Rantzau excepted, were young, or in the prime of life; they were all willing slaves of dissipation; hence it is no wonder that an old experienced courtier, who felt himself thrown out by the instrument he had chosen to forward his own ambitious views, his discernment sharpened by jealousy, and desire of revenge, should be enabled to out-general the giddy, gay, and wanton train who filled the groves with music, love, revelry, and song."

"A young and amiable woman," says Wraxall, "speaking of this unfortunate period, "who saw herself neglected by a dissolute and imbecile husband, while at the same time she was an object of respect and homage to every other person who approached her, could scarcely be supposed altogether to escape the contagion of so tainted an atmosphere; though, previous to the King's journey, she had so conducted herself, as if not wholly to escape detraction, yet to preserve a great share of general affection and popularity."

There seems, however, in this temporary forgetfulness of propriety, and torrent of dissipation, something so utterly at variance, both with what is above admitted, and elsewhere recorded, of her previous blameless retirement, and the rational and dignified tenor of the life amid

* The costliness of this gift to an ordinary courtier may counteract any unfavourable inferences which might arise from presents of corresponding value to Struensee.

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which (as in her native element) the latter days of the still youthful Queen serenely glided away, that, in her case, we must seek for its maddening cause in that sudden transition from neglect to devotion—that brief, giddy elevation to the summit of power—which, as owing to, and shared with, the triumphant minister, Carolina Matilda perhaps thought she could not sufficiently appreciate and reward.

Advantage was in the meantime taken of Struensee's glaring immoralities and growing unpopularity, to cast a shade of suspicion (wholly unfounded, and soon rejected as groundless by all save, perhaps, its calumnious authors) on the auspicious birth of a little princess, named Louisa Augusta,* the devoted attachment to whom, and affectionate discharge towards her of a mother's tenderest offices, forms a beautiful feature in the character of her unhappy parent.† At the same time, and based on the same want of principle on the part of the minister, reports were circulated, ascribing to his insidious arts, or a still more nefarious exercise of his medical functions, an increased degree of languor and imbecility, into which the young monarch suddenly fell; to which cause were ascribed the scandalous irregularities which exposed him to the contempt of his subjects, and rendered him passive with respect to the pretended excesses of the Queen, and the crimes of her creatures.

These, and similar insinuations, propagated with the utmost activity of malice, made the desired impression

* Whose daughter, when these pages were written, was the amiable and beloved Queen-Consort of Denmark.

† It affords not a less striking proof of the groundlessness of the insinuation itself than of the dissimulation of its authors, that the sponsors on this occasion were the Queen Dowager and her son Prince Frederick; while the unhesitating admission, ever since, (by a people naturally jealous on such matters) of the legitimacy of their beloved princess, seems sufficient refutation of her mother's alleged guilt.

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on the military and burghers; and, favoured by the indiscretion of the young Queen, and the fatal security of the haughty favourite, sealed the fate of both.

Juliana's court became the resort of discontented nobles, ecclesiastics, and officers, who, adopting implicitly her vindictive projects, prejudiced the nation against the measures of what they called a *German** junto, composed of upstarts suddenly emerged from obscurity, who sacrificed the national honour and interest to the desire of aggrandising themselves by plundering the state, and accumulating to their indigent families a rapid fortune by the most scandalous exactions.

That there was good foundation for the latter accusation, the subsequent state trials brought to light; the discontent of the nobles and military has been already accounted for; and the clergy found ample justification of their invectives, in the avowed infidelity, as well as profligacy of the reigning minister.†

It was while occupied in a constant succession of courtly amusements, that seemed to leave nothing to apprehend, and while precaution was strangely laid asleep, that Struensee rushed forward, as blindly as his most inveterate enemies could desire, on impending destruction. And yet warnings had not been wanting to recall him to a sense of his precarious situation. Even his own thoughtless colleague Brandt, (whom all

* Chiefly natives of Holstein, thus characterised and regarded by Danes of insular extraction; a jealousy revived in the present day.

† It is a singular, and, by well-constituted minds, will be hailed as a double proof of the omnipotence of Christian feeling and Christian truth, that the same eminent Divine who, in the exercise of his official functions as one of the pastors of the capital, had been called upon to uplift his protest against the doctrinal errors and moral delinquencies countenanced by Struensee, devoted weeks of patient and skilful argumentation to his conversion after his fall, and reaped his reward in perhaps the most satisfactory and complete case of religious conviction upon record.

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unite in designating a "shallow courtier, vain, dissolute, and wholly deficient in virtue and principle,") is said to have perceived, and pointed out, the precariousness of their joint situation. And the counsels of a man of widely differing weight and character, the British minister, might, if timely listened to, have averted his doom. For this we have the authority of an eminent Danish writer, Dr Höst, who, in his valuable work entitled "John Frederick Struensee and his Ministry," published in 1824, thus expresses himself in speaking of Sir Robert Murray Keith:—

"This sensible and worthy man could not but be uneasy as to the influence which the danger that hovered over Struensee might have on the destiny of the Queen. He urged the Count to remove from the Court; but the latter, although aware of the danger, could not tear himself away."

Colonel Keith, who perhaps fortunately for a daughter of England, as well as for his own reputation and subsequent advancement, at that critical moment, held the post of Minister of Great Britain at the Court of Denmark, afforded, like his equally talented father, a proof that to achieve success in diplomacy, it is not indispensable to pass through the preliminary steps of office. Had diplomacy been the original bent of this son's disposition, his father's eminence might have opened to him the most favourable field. But, like most young men of his age and country, we have seen that he early chose the profession of arms; and after earning distinction in the fields of fame, under the gallant Prince Ferdinand, in the wars of Germany, it was only the reduction, at their close, of his brave band of Highlanders, which led to his entrance, with even less of preparation than his father had enjoyed, on a long diplomatic career.

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Its commencement at Dresden afforded little to call forth the energies of a powerful mind. Yet it was with regret that he exchanged agreeable domestication, in a small, but delightful royal circle (whose friendship and correspondence he long enjoyed) for the stormy and critical,* though honourable, post of Minister to Denmark; at a period in the annals, both of that kingdom itself and of its unhappy Queen, the difficulties of which our previous narration will enable the least reflecting to comprehend.

The spirit in which it was entered upon, and in which these difficulties were encountered, will best be gathered from the first of those extracts from the minister's private correspondence, which (penned on the spot, from day to day, during the various stages of a most painful and eventful mission), while they enable the writer of these pages to discharge a sacred duty to the memory of an able negotiator and good man, will, by their graphic truth, and the varying emotions they record, give the liveliest idea of the perilous state of affairs in Denmark, and the position there of an ambassador from Britain.

Soon after his arrival, in June, 1771 (six months previous to the catastrophe), Colonel Keith thus writes to his father (who survived his son's appointment by three years) :—

"The first step to render my mission useful to the King's service, is to establish my reputation as a man who is above all trick or low intrigue, and who will never interfere when he can do no good. I have it sincerely at heart to deserve the public and private esteem, and I have the strongest encouragement to go

* Not the less so from dissatisfaction previously experienced (says the Editor of Malmesbury's Life) with his predecessor's conduct amid its troubles.

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on cheerfully, by the many kind expressions which have been made use of, with regard to my mission, by the *highest powers* at home. They have been repeatedly echoed to me, by Bentinck, Yorke, and from various friendly quarters; but I own that my pride was unexpectedly flattered by the very honourable testimony of the Duke D'Auguillon to the French minister here, in instructions designed for himself alone.

"How far I may be able to fulfil the expectations of friend or foe, I will not pretend to determine; but certainly, I am less sanguine on the subject than the one or the other. Politicians by profession have very little chance here, where they are, at present, admitted to *no share* of the business. The nonsense of etiquette has already thrown a stumbling-block in my way, by a new, (and, I believe, unprecedented) regulation with respect to *private audiences*.* But as I have preserved all possible respect towards this Court, and made my report with fairness and temper to my own, I can be under no uneasiness with regard to my share in this innovation and its consequences. A shut or an open door (for that is the point) is a subject to be canvassed by the higher powers; my duty is to wait for instructions, and to adhere to them quietly. In the meantime, I heartily consign that old harridan Etiquette, with all her trumpery, to the lowest underling of all possible devils! Count Osten† has met me with the greatest personal civilities; he mentions your name always with strong professions of regard, and repeats with pleasure a variety of little anecdotes which do you honour. His very active parts might perhaps be turned to better advantage than they have hitherto been in this country."

* Evidently dictated by Count Struensee's apprehensions as to the result of *free access*, by the minister of Great Britain, to either the King or *Queen*.

† The Danish minister for foreign affairs.

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"*July* 21*st*.

"I have just received answers from my principal to my first official letters; and I cannot enough acknowledge the handsome terms in which those answers are conceived. My first business is to deserve the good opinion thus flatteringly expressed from home, and the public and private esteem here, and then I shall be prepared for whatever circumstances may occur. The rage of being busy is the bane of almost all the disciples of Hugo Grotius; but I hope I am sufficiently guarded against it, by the fear of doing harm, and the very moderate ambition which attends my personal views. But while matters go on smoothly, and with no shadow of partiality to an adverse interest, I shall be very well pleased, and willing to confess myself a benevolent spectator."

This, his natural character (as all who have read his previous correspondence must admit), circumstances did not permit one so social in disposition, and upright in principle, long to retain. The first invasion of the "*Bonhommie*," "a reputation for which (he writes) I may say, without vanity, had preceded me here," arose from a two months' experience of a lack of hospitality and warmth on the part of the natives, of which mutual distrust, and the state of parties in a kingdom divided by adverse factions, and on the eve of a disastrous convulsion, may have afforded a subsequent solution.

"My situation," he writes in August, "is exactly the same as when I despatched my first letter. An intercourse of an hour, once a week, with the Court—a formal supper once in a fortnight with the fashionable people—make the whole of my public appearances; and, what may form a sure prognostic of the future society, I can safely assure you, that in a residence of two months, I have not been admitted to any one visit that I have made to *man* or *woman*, *Dane* or *Diplomatique*.

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The cheerfulness with which I submit to customs which I cannot mend, is a sort of merit which has not passed unnoticed; and I hope the people look upon me as one who does not *pine* alone, and yet is ready to mix in any thing that is sociable. I thank my stars I can live contentedly in the greatest solitude, and I have the experience of Helvoetsluys Barracks in my favour. But I never can give a greater proof than at present of the zeal that I owe to our common benefactor. Whatever may be the success of my endeavours, fortune and *comfort* are here out of the question."

In October he thus writes:—"I am sorry to say that the climate, society, and politics of this kingdom are equally uncomfortable. You may depend on my setting down nought in malice, but I will fairly state to you the particulars of each, and leave you, dear sir, to judge how far my patience is likely to be tried. The little summer I saw, was sultry and languid; August, and almost all September, rotten and rainy; and the few clear days we have had lately, too chilly to be abroad with pleasure. Five months of a dismal and variable winter are now awaiting us, with as little defence against the cold, both of body and spirit, as can well be imagined. After looking round me with an anxious, yet a benevolent eye, for any thing that may be called a society, or even a single friend, male or female, I am forced to own to myself that there is not any hope of succeeding. I do not mean to asperse a whole nation, in which there are undoubtedly many worthy people; but such is the shyness of all those I have seen to each other, and still more to men of my cloth, that meeting them now and then, at dinner, or in a public place, forms not a more intimate connection than that of three or four Dutchmen who have crossed in the same Doit-boat at Rotterdam.

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"An inquiry about what you do, and how you pass your time, when absent from these people, never enters their heads, any more than they ever suffer you to enter within their doors. After experiencing what is called a '*distinguished reception,*' which ended in two or three formal dinners to this good hour, I never was admitted to a single visit. The greatest part of the nobility, having lost their employments, are retired from the capital, but by this we are only a few yearly feasts out of pocket; for Le President Ogier (qui faisait la pluie et le beau tems pendant une Ambassade de quatorze ans), could never, as I am assured, acquire a familiar footing in a Danish family. This is a desperate matter."

The constitutional and irrepressible *gaieté de cœur*, the literal *heart cheerfulness* of the writer, finds vent in a playful portrait gallery (too long and personal for entire insertion) of the male and female members of the society, so called, diplomatic and private, whose rare festivities he partook in; for, from the reckless dissipation of the "wags of the Court," (as he styles, in manly contempt, the profligate clique of the minister), he as evidently held himself aloof, as they manifested their dread of his character and influence, by estranging him from everything like personal, or even official, intercourse with the King.

As a welcome relief from much of a graver and deeply painful character, as a proof, not altogether superfluous, in our matter-of-fact age, how nearly allied are wit and wisdom, nay, that not incompatible are even politics and playfulness, we cannot resist a few further extracts from those family *épanchemens de cœur*, in which, during the earlier and less anxious periods of his sojourn, the ambassador sought indemnification for his forced isolation, and portrayed its whimsical extent.

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"Now," says he in another letter dated October, "for the Matadores among our females! Madame de Blosset, the French minister's lady, is really good-humoured and agreeable. Rich they are, beyond the measure of Frenchmen, (*cent mille livres par an,*) but I got my single dinner from them two months ago, and *word spake never more,* no, not even an afternoon's dish of tea! Madame Haxthausen, the wife of your friend at the head of the Admiralty, (who speaks of you with the highest admiration), a fat, fair, unmeaning lass, looks at me once a month, as if she had an inkling to be kind; but I have had the *fatted calf there* too, and though I could almost converse with her from my window to hers, I must bring a battering-ram if I mean to force open her door.

"There is an Admiral Romeling, who from a man-of-war education, has a warm side to our country folks; but he is out of place, and has little fortune, so that I am kept at a distance from a cheerful dumpling woman his wife, and a tall, comely, lively lass his daughter, who seems to have a fire and vivacity which are seldom found in this climate. A Monsieur and Madame Juel are just come to town, with a sweet little cherubim of a daughter, just fifteen; consequently just the very thing which can be turned to no earthly advantage by a gentleman of my years. These good people curtsied to me very politely at my presentation; and, as they are renowned for hospitality, I have since had the happiness of seeing the *outside of their street door,* which is of strong handsome oak, and painted yellow!

"We have, however, a Madame de Mercières (aunt to my little Dresden Juel, as indeed they *all are*); this lady is the thirty years' spouse of an aged lord, and she (as I am told) feeds all mankind at a kind of refectory table once a week. I think I have a chance of being

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among the strangers whom she taketh in; for her porter has smiled most graciously when he has received my cards from the running footman. A good omen this, and I make the most of everything! I have a laughing hoyden of a *vis à vis*, who deplores my solitary situation, and has *womanfully* set aside all fear of scandal, by admitting me, during four months, to above seventy-five *minutes* of giggling conversation, divided into two equal parts, without the presence of a single soul, except her *husband and mother!* However, I am determined not to nip this bud of kindness, and if it produces any tolerable fruit, I shall be proud of the production.

"Our week is now going to be parcelled out in plays and operas, and there will be at least a place of rendezvous every evening. Yet are we starched and demure, even in our playhouses, for every human being has his or her place allotted by the book of *Etiquette*, and *sticks* to it during the whole performance. Those who sit two boxes from me might as well be in *Norway*, for any manner of communication I can have with them. My little *Juel* is within five seats of being as great a lady as Madame de Blosset; and as I squat next to *Madame L'Ambassadrice*, I can, at least twice in an evening, see the tip of my cherub's nose. Were she to marry into the third class of grandees, I should see no more of her during my stay in Denmark! It is really ridiculous to see how the world is parcelled out here into no less than nine classes, six of whom I must never encounter without horror. Yet my opera-glass tells me that numbers eight and nine beat us all hollow as to flesh and blood. But as *Surgeons* become *Counts* and *Prime Ministers* in this island, my buxom *nines* may hereafter be *Court-ladies*, for aught I know."*

* Alluding to the original profession and rise of the then omnipotent *Count Struensee*, to whom this allusion recalls us. The unreserved style

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But we must return from this digression to the graver and more indignant strain in which Sir R. Keith describes (which he does in a graphic and strongly drawn series of portraits, coincident in their main features with the concise sketch already given) the rise and character of those extraordinary minions of fortune, by whom the destinies of Denmark, and, alas! those of one nearer and dearer to his heart, as a daughter of England, were at that period swayed. He thus introduces to his confidential circle, the *parvenu premier* :—

"*October 6th*, 1771.

"The Fourth Knight," (of the Order of MATILDA, instituted, alas! to be unhappily disgraced by its chief members), "the founder and artisan of all this stately fabric, the man who unites in his single person all the honours, and *all* the powers of two kingdoms, is Count Struensee; who, from the boldness of his attempt to overthrow not only the ministry, but to expel all the nobility, and change every department in the state, as well as from his complete success in this hazardous undertaking, deserves a better and more expert biographer than I can pretend to be."

After a succinct sketch of the birth and parentage of the *Medico*-minister, whose ambition, he says, was at first supposed, even by the sage Count Bernstorff, (who disdained to crush him, though warned of his determination), "to reach no higher than to rule (like the physician in the Rehearsal) the healths of both their Majesties," Colonel Keith thus proceeds:—

"I have reason to believe, how odd soever it may appear, that from his first admittance into the palace,

and nature of these communications, it may be mentioned, arose from their being written for transmission by a Scotch captain of a vessel then lying wind-bound at Copenhagen.

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he laid his plan to be Prime Minister. He began by governing all those of his own sphere, and rendering himself necessary to those of a higher. He was first made *Lecteur du Roi*, and a sort of *Sécrétaire du Cabinet;* then, on the return from England, *Maître des Requêtes*, (an office which meant anything or everything,) and soon after, he called to his assistance the amiable and striking figures I have just now painted, viz., Rantzau, Gähler, and Brandt. He dismissed Count Bernstorff, Rosencrantz, Molke, Thott, in short, every minister and great officer of the Crown. He acquired an irresistible ascendancy over the Throne, he made himself *Chevalier de Mathilde*, and Count of Denmark, and having abolished all ministry and councils, he took to himself the *exclusive* title of *Ministre du Cabinet*, Finances, Army, Navy, *colléges et cuisines;* every branch of power or prerogative rested in him. To consummate all, he procured and published a Royal Sign Manual, declaring, that whatever orders were given by Count Struensee, to the heads or subalterns of every board, or department of Government, should be obeyed *instantly, implicitly*, and without appeal. Thus, indeed, did he rule, in fact, the healths and minds of both ——; but I have said too much upon a subject which gives me real pain for a thousand reasons.

"The politics of this minister are doubtful with regard to foreign nations, but all his professions are in favour of Russia. He will, however, admit of no close intercourse, from the fear of being dictated to; and perhaps he waits to be courted, more than it has hitherto been thought proper to give into. The foreign ministers being the only persons whom he cannot kick and cuff at pleasure, he has effectually debarred them from the least access to the throne; and for that

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purpose all private audiences are abolished. He never condescends to mention business to any member of the *corps diplomatique*, and Count Osten, through whom those affairs are transacted, reports to Struensee in writing, and not to the Sovereign; and receives his *dictates*, though not placidly, nor always without grumbling. The Prime Minister is so jealous of the interference of the *corps diplomatique*, that if any one of us were to give his opinion that beef and mutton were my proper food for the royal table, I am convinced he would forbid them being served up at it for a twelvemonth. I have told you, dear sir, that I am determined (where no good is in my power) to be cautious of doing harm. I shall therefore be quiet for some time, especially as my mission here was looked upon by the *outs* as *highly important and critical*—but shall I always be a cypher? No! And now I will venture to prognosticate a little, in all the confidence of a private conversation with the Hermits.* I long to get through this subject, for, much against my will, I have said more ill of mankind in this sheet than in all my life.

"This 'man mountain' seems to have wasted his strength, by the hasty strides he made to get at the summit of power. He is dexterous at overturning, but not equally so in building. He has destroyed a host of enemies, without making a single friend. He despises his quondam helpmates, and may probably soon dismiss them. Willing to grasp all the reins, he does not consider how impossible it is for one man to do all the business. He wants tools, and will not seek them; so that the few useful regulations he has made are not

* So styled throughout Sir R. Keith's familiar letters, from the "Hermitage," the name of his father's country house.

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carried properly into execution: the business accumulates in every department, and the confusion which arises from this will soon render him as obnoxious to the middling class of people as he is already to the gentlemen. The populace love the King, and are extremely averse to the delegation of his power to a man whose rise is so unbecoming. The little incendiaries of opposition (no longer restrained by the rigour of the government) print and publish the most *scandalous and infamous libels*, and by name threaten the minister. The popular clamour runs high, and the opposition of the nobles, though sluggish and timid, contributes to create a crisis of frenzy in the mob, which may (they think) be justly directed against the position of the minister. In a despotic government, the populace, when pushed beyond the limits of the law, know no bounds; I therefore sincerely hope and pray that all lawless attempts to kindle a flame among them may meet with the punishment they deserve. But if even it shall unfortunately happen, that the lower citizens shall be brought to signalise their resentment against the principal objects of it, *Brandt* and *Struensee*, you, dear sir, will not be surprised if a Danish mob should, in its vengeance, be cruel and sanguinary.

"A few hundreds of Norwegian sailors, who had some demands of pay, and were unable to feed themselves in this dear capital, went, three weeks ago, in a tumultuary, though *deliberate* manner, to demand justice at Hirschholm.* Upon the first promise of redress they returned quietly to town; but it was easy to see what might have been effected by this handful of men, if they had been led to the palace by a less pardonable impulse than that

* A country palace near Copenhagen.

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of hunger. The possibility of such an application is now manifest, as well as its *impunity;* and what is very important to the fortune of Struensee, it is generally believed that his boasted intrepidity forsook him upon the late appearance of the sailors. He now becomes vulnerable from every quarter, and some who did not dare to look at him, now shake off their deep submission, together with that awe which was so necessary for the support of his unbounded authority. But the rest to-morrow. Adieu."

"*October* 20*th*, 1771.

"A succession of different articles of business has prevented my continuing my report of the state of Denmark; but as things are still nearly on the same footing, I resume my story where I left off. I am confirmed in my belief that Count Struensee was struck with a sense of his danger; and that some little time ago he would not have been averse to shelter himself from the storm, even by abandoning the summit of power. In a country of more enterprise than this, his opponents would not have let slip so favourable an opportunity; but as they have given him time, the most they have to hope for the present, is the nomination of a cabinet council of three or four persons. The sailors, who first began the riot, have been sent back by degrees to their different districts in Norway, and upon the coast; the liberty of the press is almost *entirely abolished* by a late order, and the mob is overawed by calling in a reinforcement of cavalry, which parades by squadrons, whenever any public occasion calls the people together. Notwithstanding all this, the discontent runs still very high, and perhaps before I close this letter, I may have an opportunity of mentioning to you the different schemes which are in agitation, and the share which my

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attachment to her Danish Majesty (arising from my duty to the King my master) may prompt me to take in them. I do not think it the part of a foreign minister to dabble too much in ministerial intrigues, but there may be occasions where the interposition of an honest and disinterested person may keep things steady; and prevent new upstarts from adding their wild projects to those which have already reduced this kingdom to so low a pitch."

"*October 30th.*

"There is such a continual fluctuation in the politics of this Court, that I have done wisely to suspend my predictions till the moment of the vessel's departure, as I shall not then be in danger of contradicting myself, which I must have done a dozen times since the beginning of this journal, if I had trusted to the appearances of things. We are pretty *quiet* at present; the minister has suspended his projected dismissions, and the public the violence of their clamours. With respect to myself, I am neither admitted to the favour of the Court nor the intrigues of the opposition. I am in hopes that moderation and impartiality may procure me some weight, which *I shall never employ but for some essential purpose;* as *nothing but a dangerous extremity* could induce me to mix, upon this theatre, with the present actors, who neither deserve esteem from their parts or their principles. I have often thought that there was a sort of injudicious fuss made *somewhere* about my mission to this Court, which awakened the attention of different parties, and made them expect things from me which I had neither the wish nor the *orders* to undertake. The Ministers determined from the *first* to prevent my having any access to the principal persons; and as I very soon

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found how little influence my opinions or good offices were likely to procure me, I was not sorry to acquiesce in an exclusion which was made general to all my colleagues.

"I am neither mortified nor fretted by this treatment: I can wait very patiently *till an opportunity shall offer to exert myself for the advantage of those very persons who now keep me at such a distance.* I pay no court to this mushroom Minister, nor do I affect to thwart him; and I am certain that I have lost nothing in his opinion, by being perhaps the man in Denmark who is least dazzled by the *éclât* of his fortune. His haughtiness to every one of the nobility, they have in a great measure deserved by their pitiful obsequiousness; but I have nothing to ask or to fear, and Count Struensee knows that my inaction is only founded upon what I think my duty. There are *some circumstances* of his situation, not as a minister, but a *man*, which I own stir up my indignation now and then; but I have an ample revenge in the anxiety, suspicions, and fears, which visibly and incessantly rack his mind. I heard within these few days that the bond of concord between him and his *Brother Count* Brandt is near its dissolution. You will judge, from my little sketch of his character, that the fall of this knight of the new order will be unlamented; and my stay in Denmark *must be very short indeed if the rest of the brotherhood do not file off in their turns before me.*

"The scenes that pass here are often ridiculous, sometimes wicked, as well as despicable; but they have at least the merit of succeeding one another in a rapid succession. I have five hundred good stories for the Hermits whenever I shall have the happiness to see them; and in the mean time, they may be assured that this Court has not the most distant resemblance to any

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other under the sun. When I was upon the road to this city, I heard of the downfall of a Monsieur de W——, who had been in high favour with the Sovereign, and raised from page, to two or three handsome posts at Court. This *young* gentleman had fancied to himself that he was become a man of importance, and began to *vapour;* when Struensee at once dismissed the mighty *Maréchal de la Cour, Chambellan,* &c. &c., in a very laughable manner—by creating him very unexpectedly—*Lieutenant of Dragoons,* in a regiment in Jutland! and sending him to his garrison, with a small pension. He became probably as awkward a lieutenant, as he had been a courtier; however, his military progress is again at a stand, as he was called back to town yesterday, (to my great amusement), and will immediately resume his functions as a *wag of the Court!*

"There may be something '*rotten*' in the 'state of Denmark,' but there is nothing *rusty;* for all manner of things and persons are rubbed up alternately. *I* give my vote for Lieutenant W—— being a *Chevalier de l'Ordre* at the next promotion. But the fellow is a *fool,* and hitherto (the Royal Family excepted) that dignity has been restricted to *knaves!* But this is a venomous style, and so I'll call a new chapter."

"*November 7th.*

"'A man may smile and smile, and be a villain;
At least, I'm sure it may be so in Denmark;'

says Hamlet, and Hamlet knew his countrymen. The following example will show you, dear Sir, what right I have to join in this opinion. Soon after my arrival here, and whilst the strongest professions of attachment to England and Russia were echoing in my ears, I received a private intimation that Marshal St.

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Germain * (the man most deservedly obnoxious to both crowns) was recalled to Copenhagen. My representations produced the avowal of the recall, but at the same time, the most express declaration that the Marshal was not to be employed; and that the only motive of the Sovereign's invitation was to make the Marshal spend his pension of 14,000 crowns in *philosophic retirement in Denmark!* The supposition that the ardent and haughty spirit of St. Germain could sink at once into insignificance, and he become an inactive spectator of the politics of a Court which he had formerly governed, was too gross for belief; but as I found myself unable to exclude him, my next care was to fetter these slippery politicians, by a promise in writing, (sent to the Court of Petersburg) that he was not to be replaced in any employment. This, in all probability, suspended his journey from Florence hither. Osten has promised me an explanation, but I defy the most artful gloss to varnish over the want of truth and consistency. A sad trade, indeed, is mine! for with these men must I labour to build up a lasting edifice, for which, at this moment, I know not where to look for the first stone. *Making bricks without straw is a joke to it!* I shall call in Count Panin's imperial mandates to my assistance; and if I am ordered to grapple with these gentry, I already feel (thank God) the superiority which honesty has over low cunning. I am sure if I had *carte blanche,* I could already have *dismissed half a dozen of the most worthless fellows alive.*"

There are few who can now read these manly expressions of honest British indignation without regret,

* A former minister high in office in Denmark; and to justify the sagacity respecting him of Sir R. M. Keith, an active though not ostensible agent in the revolution which followed.

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that the fetters of diplomatic *etiquette* placed a bar in the way of the gallant representative of England, in his evident longings to free, by the removal of an unworthy favourite, from the toils in which she was entangled, the sister of his beloved Sovereign. Had he been able to foresee (as no one could, till the event fell like a thunderbolt on Denmark and Europe) that sacrilegious hands would be raised to involve a royal victim in the catastrophe to which he looked for her emancipation—the same prompt and chivalrous daring which bade him overstep all the limits of precedent and diplomacy, to shield from harm the already "discrowned head" of the lovely sufferer, would have made him incur any degree of personal risk or disavowal in the attempt (probably successful) to avert the meditated injury. But it was reserved for a woman, herself a Queen, to invade, at the instigation of short-sighted ambition, the sanctity hitherto surrounding the throne; and by directing popular fury against one of her own sex and rank, to teach the sanguinary lesson which revolutionary frenzy in another kingdom was not slow in carrying out. The blow might have been anticipated and the destinies of royalty reversed, if (as writes a contemporary but anonymous author) the proposal of Count Brandt, provided the King's sanction should be obtained, which would not have been difficult, to arrest the Queen Dowager and conduct her to a place of safety, had been accepted by Struensee. But his fatal security not only made him reject this questionable scheme, but left free scope to those of his enemies whose plans for his destruction were silently maturing. Various consultations were held by them relative to the measures proper to be pursued, and towards the close of the year 1771, they finally determined to proceed to action without farther delay. On the first day of

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January every year it was customary at Copenhagen for the populace to assemble near the royal palace, where an ox, roasted whole, was distributed among them. As the Court and Royal Family usually assisted at this festivity, Queen Matilda had signified her intention of being present, accompanied by the King and their ordinary attendants. Such an occasion appeared too favourable to be neglected. The partisans of Juliana Maria, and Prince Frederick, having gained over a sufficient number of the soldiery, came to a resolution of breaking in among the crowd, arresting their opponents, and even of putting them to death upon the spot if any resistance were attempted.

This scheme, however, which so many circumstances appeared to facilitate, was disconcerted at the very point of execution, by an anonymous warning sent to a nobleman in the Queen's household, enjoining him to be absent, if he regarded his safety. This mysterious intimation he communicated to her Majesty, who, on pretence of indisposition, immediately announced her determination not to be present at the festivity. This resolution of course frustrated the design at the time; but the failure of the project neither inspired the persecuted party with sufficient caution against similar attempts, nor did it relax the activity of their opponents in renewing their machinations, and watching to take advantage of some more favourable crisis. Such an opportunity soon presented itself — a masked ball, which was to be given in the royal palace on the 16th January, 1772.

Of various versions of this celebrated and tragical event, all coinciding in their principal details, that of Sir Nathaniel Wraxall (ostensibly derived, immediately after the death of Carolina Matilda in Hanover, from her faithful valet de chambre, Mantel) might

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on that ground alone deserve selection as the most authentic as well as graphic. But the residence of the writer at Vienna, in considerable habits of intimacy with Sir R. M. Keith, lends an additional stamp of probable accuracy, to details on which (from allusions in Sir N. W.'s letters) they had evidently conversed, and whose publicity would prevent that *most discreet of ministers* from having any *scruple* in confirming them.

"It was resolved," says Sir Nathaniel, "to seize on Queen Matilda and the principal persons attached to her at the close of the masked ball, which has been already mentioned. Count Rantzau* undertook the delicate commission of persuading the King to sign the order for the purpose, and of putting it afterwards into execution. To Koller Banner was assigned the important task of arresting Struensee; and all the inferior arrangements for ensuring success were settled with great dexterity. They were, nevertheless, on the point of being overturned at the very moment when all was ripe for action. Rantzau, upon whose courage, fidelity, and secrecy, no reliance could be placed, determined not

* Of this worthy, the British minister, not addicted to uncharitable judgments, thus wrote in a private letter, long previous to his treachery, and defection from the Struensee party:—"Count Rantzau, at this moment Lieutenant-General, Confidential Councillor, Knight of the Queen's Order, &c., would, if he had lived within reach of Justice Fielding, have furnished matter for an Old Bailey trial, any one year of the last twenty of his life. And yet this man, (who professes to despise law and morality) has been supported against the remonstrances of the Czarina, who knows that whatever power is placed in his hands, will be barefacedly sold to the French! He says he is an acquaintance of your's at Petersburgh; but this does not save him from the open and avowed contempt which I owe him. I am not without hopes of sending this honourable gentleman *once more upon his travels!*" Had this laudable wish been seconded, the Revolution of 1772 might never have taken place.

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only to withdraw his assistance from the party in which he had enlisted, but to reveal the whole conspiracy to Struensee. On the afternoon of the 16th of January, only a few hours before the ball was to begin, he wrote to the minister, desiring to see him at his own apartments upon business of the utmost importance. Struensee intended to have gone thither, but being detained by a variety of affairs till it grew late, he went straight to the ball, and thereby lost the fairest opportunity of extricating himself from destruction.

"Rantzau, thus disappointed in his design of betraying his associates, was not the less resolved to renounce all further participation in their schemes. He sent a message, therefore, to the Queen Dowager, acquainting her that he should be unable to come to the palace, or to execute the part assigned him in the projected revolution, on account of a violent attack of gout, to which disease he was constitutionally subject. This message, at once embarrassing and unexpected, threw the persons to whom it was addressed into the utmost consternation. But the spirit and decision of Koller Banner soon surmounted Rantzau's pretended indisposition. Having entreated the Queen Juliana Maria not to be alarmed, and conscious of the motives from which Rantzau had acted, Koller Banner sent his own sedan-chair to the Count's house. It was accompanied by two grenadiers, with their bayonets fixed, who had positive orders to put him into the chair at all events, and to conduct him to the palace without an instant's delay. They were authorised to use force if necessary; but Rantzau, aware that resistance was vain, submitted, was carried to court, and performed the service expected of him. Koller Banner was the animating soul of the enterprise, to whose coolness, presence of mind, and intrepidity, its success must be principally attributed.

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During the whole night, while at the ball, he maintained the utmost serenity of deportment, and played at the same game of cards with Monsieur Berger, whom he immediately afterwards arrested.

"The circumstances which took place in the course of the evening excited remark, and ought to have awakened suspicion. The King, Queen, and their attendants, entered the ball-room before ten o'clock; but Prince Frederick, contrary to his usual custom, and in some measure contrary to the respect due from him towards their majesties, did not arrive till more than an hour later. His countenance was flushed, and his disordered looks betrayed the agitation of his mind. As soon as he came, the Queen, advancing towards him, said, 'Vous venez d'arriver bien tard, mon frère. Qu'avez-vous?'—'C'est que j'ai eu des affaires, Madame,' replied he. 'Il me semble,' added she gaily, 'que vous auriez mieux fait de penser à vos plaisirs qu' à vos affaires, pendant une soirée de bal!'

"To this sisterly playfulness, so calculated to shake the firmness of a conspirator, the Prince made little or no reply, and the conversation ended.

"The other incident was still more calculated to have alarmed Struensee, if he had not overlooked it, or had not omitted the necessary precautions for his safety. As he was conscious of his own unpopularity, and dreaded some commotion among the people, he had surrounded the ball-room with guards, on whose fidelity he knew, or believed he could rely. But the officer who commanded them, having been gained by the opposite party, changed the soldiers. The alteration was even noticed by some of Struensee's friends; though it did not impress them with sufficient apprehension to produce any inquiry in consequence.

"Between twelve and one o'clock the King quitted

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the room, and retired. The Queen, who continued there to a later hour, supped with a large party in her own box, to which Prince Frederick was not invited. After dancing the greater part of the night with Struensee, her Majesty and he withdrew nearly at the same time, about three o'clock.

"A singular fatality seems to have attended the Queen and her friends. In order to seize upon so numerous a body of men, many of whom it was unquestionable would resist, if they were not taken by surprise, and separately, it was requisite to attack them when unprepared, and alone. The Countess D'Osten had invited a select company of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were Struensee and Brandt, to drink tea in her apartments, after the conclusion of the ball. If this party had taken place, it would have frustrated the plans of the Queen Dowager and her son. They would probably have esteemed it too dangerous to attack several of the first men in Denmark, collected together in one room, who were capable of resistance, and might either have escaped, or have defended themselves successfully. In such an attempt, the Royal Palace, where the principal among them were lodged, must have been rendered a scene of blood and horror. But one of the ladies who was invited, Madame de Schimmelmann, having a violent headache, excused herself; Madame de Bulow, unwilling to go without her friend, made her excuses likewise; and the Countess D'Osten being then the only remaining female of the party, it was abandoned. Every one retired to their separate apartments, and left the chiefs of the enterprise free to commence their operations.

"The moment for action was now arrived. Rantzau, without loss of time, entering the bed-chamber of the King, awoke him, and acquainted him that there existed

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a conspiracy against his person and dignity, at the head of which were his wife,* Struensee, and various of their associates. He then besought his Majesty to consult his own security by instantly signing an order for their arrest, which Rantzau tendered to him; using every argument to enforce his solicitation. But Christian, though feeble in mind, and taken by surprise, not only hesitated, but refused to affix his name to the paper. The Queen Dowager and Prince Frederick were therefore called in to his bed-side; and by means of expostulations, supported by exaggerated or false representations of the danger which he (or rather *they*) incurred from delay, they at last procured his reluctant consent. He signed the order, which was immediately carried into execution."

"An enterprize more hazardous," says the native author already quoted, (whose details, while coinciding in their main features with those of Mantel, are now given as much fuller and more graphic), "could scarcely be conceived; and nothing but the consummate prudence and address of Count Rantzau could have carried it into execution.† The Count had pledged his word to the King to hasten to his aid in an hour of peril; but the monarch's intellects were so enfeebled, and he was known to be so completely awed by the thraldom in

* "That there ever existed any political plot between Struensee and the Queen," says a modern Danish authority, "*no one* seriously thinks. But his fall was determined on, and it necessarily involved that of the Queen, the party finding it *indispensable* to remove from the country every one possessing influence."

† The anxieties experienced by the conspirators during the King's indecision, are represented as extreme. Had daylight, or even the ordinary time for the palace to become awake and astir, arrived before it was overcome, the fate designed by them for others, would have been their own! As it was, retributive justice was not altogether wanting. Within a *year*, every one engaged in the arrests, was either a disgraced fugitive, a state prisoner, or a voluntary exile from Denmark.

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which he had long been kept, that it was not at all improbable he should either totally forget, or disown what he had done. In case of failure, an ignominious death awaited Rantzau; and even if successful, he was well aware that it was too probable the sovereignty would be transferred to Juliana, which he was about to *wrest* from the unsteady hand of the voluptuous Struensee. He did not risk himself by any personal communication with the troops, till the moment of action had arrived; though there is no doubt that his character for courage and generosity, the splendour of his name and influence over the soldiery, had a far greater effect in producing their adhesion, than that of his subordinates, Eichstedt and Koller Banner.

"The latter had long been a secret agent of Queen Juliana, though at the same time an assiduous and obsequious frequenter of Struensee's levees, and assistant at his ministerial dinners. He is represented as a middle-aged, saturnine person, of a cold and revengeful character; and, either from ambition or personal resentment, he eagerly embraced the office of arresting his former patron.*

"To do this it was necessary to pass through the anteroom where slept a favourite young valet of Struensee's, who, however devotedly attached to his master, was too much taken by surprise to have given him (had time permitted) sufficient warning to escape by the private staircase; though he afterwards showed great presence of mind in secreting, not only the Count's valuable watch and jewels, but some papers by which he and others might have been farther compromised. The poor lad (who, it is said, had been haunted in the earlier

* If, as a German poet, in his fine tragedy of "Struensee," has represented him, the avenger of a former object of affection seduced and abandoned by Struensee, his stern execution of the office is accounted for.

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portion of the night by dreams too prophetic of some evil to his lord) was waked from perturbed slumbers by endeavours to force the lock of his door, and being commanded to open in the King's name, on pain of instant death, had no alternative but to obey.

"In an instant Colonel Koller Banner, dressed in full uniform (red turned up with black), with two inferior officers, and Captain Disentis of the Norwegian regiment, stept within; two soldiers held each a cocked pistol to his head, and another pointed a third at his breast; whilst the Colonel, bearing a wax taper in his hand, anxiously, yet softly exclaimed, 'Have you awoke the Count?' 'I have not,' replied the trembling page. 'Remember,' replied the Colonel, 'you are a state prisoner, and your life pays the forfeit if you have told a falsehood.' The Colonel then tried the door of Struensee's room, and finding it fast, compelled the reluctant valet to surrender the master key, and the door was opened as softly as possible.*

"Colonel Banner was the first who entered, followed by the three inferior officers, each with a drawn sword in his right, and a wax light in his left hand. The Count slept so soundly, that he did not awake with all

* This sudden transition from a palace to a dungeon, if it can scarcely be heightened, may perhaps be brought more home to the imagination by the description of the luxurious apartment so shortly to be exchanged for a gloomy vault, and the pallet of the meanest malefactor. "Count Struensee's apartment," (says the Danish MS., so often quoted) "was furnished in a style of royal magnificence; the mirrors were large and of the purest glass; the most common utensils, of silver, or silver gilt. Count Struensee's bed-room was hung with rich figured damask, the furniture of his bed and of the windows was purple velvet, richly trimmed with deep gold fringe; the canopy was shaped in the form of a royal crown. Struensee was particularly nice in his person and dress, and used the most costly perfumes profusely. His valet slept in an ante-room through which lay the way to the Count's bed-chamber; the valet's bed furniture was magnificent, being sky-blue silk trimmed with silver lace and fringe; it was concealed by a superb screen.

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this noise or blaze of tapers. He lay with his head on his arm, the book with which he had read himself to sleep, lay on the floor. After a moment's pause, during which Koller Banner stood gazing sternly on the unconscious culprit, he approached, and, touching Struensee on the shoulder, awoke him to all the horrors of sudden and sure perdition.

"His consternation may be much easier conceived than described. Suddenly he rose half up, and wild with terror, cried—'What is all this? In God's name, what is all this about?' Colonel Banner, in a loud and stern voice, answered—'You are the King's prisoner! behold the royal warrant for your arrest. You must dress yourself without delay and come with me.' 'You will allow me to find clothes to dress with,' said Struensee; and Banner permitted the valet to go to his master's wardrobe, whence he hastily snatched a light-blue morning frock, which had been made in London, of Manchester velvet, and a waistcoat of the same;* but such was his confusion that he could not find any small-clothes, and the Count was forced to put on the pair of a *gay colour* which had formed part of his masquerade dress. It was an excessively cold morning, and the Count was permitted to wrap himself in his fur cloak, which having been procured, he was hurried by Banner and the others to the guard-room. The shivering valet, while permitted, at his master's request, to dress himself, contrived to take up the Count's gold English repeater, his ring and brooch, both of diamonds of great value, and a purse lying near the bed, containing about eighty ducats, all of which he trusted he had secured for his master's benefit. In a few moments he was called below; there he saw the

* It was in these clothes that the unfortunate Count afterwards appeared (probably from necessity) at his execution.

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guard-room blazing with tapers, and the two state prisoners, who were kept separate. Struensee, accompanied by officers with drawn swords and loaded pistols, was put into the first of two coaches which stood at the door, and conveyed to the citadel. Here the prisoners were at first confined in a room belonging to the officers, two of whom, relieved every two hours, were constantly inside, and two sentinels outside the door. During their progress to the citadel, Struensee is said to have testified the deepest despondency, while his more energetic comrade Count Brandt, whose ineffectual resistance at the time of his arrest, and dauntless conduct on the scaffold, attested his nobler origin, as well as courageous temper, displayed the intrepidity which never forsook him.*

"On arriving at the citadel, and when Count Struensee was delivered as a state criminal to the commandant, the former said in a mournful voice, 'I suppose this visit is totally unexpected by you.' 'Not at all,' replied the uncourteous commandant. 'I have been, for a long time past, constantly expecting your excellency.' During the first day of his confinement, Struensee seemed stupified; he did not eat, he drank only a little wine and water; he wept, but not excessively, till he saw his valet enter, whose captivity called a flood of tears to the relief of his master's bosom. The Count, to whom no one was permitted to speak, was so overcome by the honest grief depicted in the face of the young man, that he took him by the hand, kissed his

* Count Ernest Brandt was descended from a noble though not titled family. In person he was moderately tall, lightly made, a fine military figure, but considerably marked by the small pox. His eyes, hair, and complexion, were dark, his disposition gay and lively in the extreme; he dressed with great elegance, and was the idol of the ladies of Queen Matilda's giddy court.

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cheek, and said, 'Poor fellow! I intended to have provided for thee; I delayed it too long, not wishing to lose thy services, and now thou art the companion of my prison! Canst thou forgive me for this?' The young man, affected to a degree of intense sympathy, sobbing and crying like a child, threw himself at his master's feet, and embracing his knees, said, 'Oh God! oh God! if I had not opened the door, my beloved master might have escaped!'*

"The officers who were present, could hardly refrain from shedding tears. Availing himself of their not understanding German, the valet told the Count, while resting his head on his knees, that he had secured his gold repeater, diamond pin, and brooch, and also his purse, which he slipped into his hand. He also contrived to communicate the appalling tidings of the arrest of the Queen, and her removal to Cronenburg, and of the incarceration of the Count's brother, and other adherents, and the popular tumults which had ensued; which, though not wholly unexpected, deepened Struensee's already overwhelming apprehensions. His characteristic generosity in wishing to provide (from the purse he had secreted) for his servant's possible necessities, led to a search, on the entrance of the coarse unfeeling commandant, whereby the latter became possessed of the magnificent spoil: not only of the money contained in the purse, but of the valuable gold watch purchased by the Count in England (with all its appendages) for three hundred pounds; a ring valued at a thousand, and a brooch at five hundred, both presents in former

* There seems some uncertainty in this. If the secret staircase led, as has been alleged, to the Queen's apartments, he would have been infallibly seized there; if it merely led to a gallery communicating with the rest of the palace, he might have escaped from thence, but not from the city.

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times of splendour and prosperity from the Queen.* The sole relics of past state and grandeur, (left, as if in humiliating contrast with the horrors of the dungeon they so strangely adorned), were parts of the silver-gilt dressing plate, whose daily use must have reminded the chained criminal of advantages recklessly abused, and madly forfeited.

"The commandant, addressing the Count, told him that orders were given to allow him four shillings sterling per diem,† and two for his attendant; and then turning to the valet, he said, 'You have told the Count of the riots and other occurrences, as well as handed him a purse of ducats. Now mark what I say. If during your confinement and attendance you tell the Count anything whatever, *even if it rains*, you shall be sent to Gluckstadt, condemned to perpetual slavery and chains. As the Count is ignorant of our mother tongue, and you can speak German, you are to use that language, and to speak loud enough to be heard by the sentinels outside; and care will be taken that the officers on guard shall also know German.'"

It is said, on the same authority, that it was by the influence of Count Rantzau, that the valets of the two Counts were confined in the same prisons with their masters, and allowed to attend them. He was afraid they would otherwise be condemned to perpetual indignities, if not to private torture; but as the privilege was withdrawn, after the judicial investigations began, it has been hinted that threats at least of the latter severities were employed to extort confessions from Struensee. But we must not allow these interesting

* It will be recollected that she had made a present of equal value to Count Rantzau.

† A sum fully equal to the decent supply of his wants; and said to be equal in Copenhagen, in 1772, to twenty shillings in London.

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details respecting less illustrious victims of the conspiracy (Brandt having, as before mentioned, been meantime arrested, after an obstinate resistance, by Colonel Beringshiold, and General Gähler and his lady, who had that evening formed the King's card party, been placed in arrest) to detain us longer from its most daring and unprecedented feature.

"The most dangerous and important act of the enterprise still remained to be performed—that of arresting Queen Carolina Matilda. After retiring from the ball, she continued for some time in her own room, before she went to bed, occupied in nursing her little daughter, who was still at the breast. Struensee's chamber being situated under the Queen's, the noise made in seizing his person was indistinctly heard by her Majesty. She by no means, however, attributed it to the real cause. On the contrary, imagining that the disturbance was occasioned by the company which, as she knew, was to meet in the apartment of Madame D'Osten, and which party she concluded had been transferred to Struensee's, she ordered one of her women to go down and request them to be less intemperate in their mirth, as they would otherwise prevent her from taking any repose. The woman did not return, the noise ceased, and the Queen having soon retired to rest, fell into a profound sleep.

"It was about five o'clock in the morning when she was awakened by a Danish female attendant, who always lay in the adjoining room. Holding a candle in one hand, she held out a paper to the Queen in the other, which, with marks of agitation, she requested of her Majesty to peruse. It contained a request, rather than an order, couched in very concise but respectful terms, stating that the 'King of Denmark, for reasons of a private nature, wished her to remove to one of the

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royal palaces in the country for a few days.' The Queen, in her first surprise, had imagined that the note which she saw in the woman's hand, came from the Baron de Bulow, her Master of the Horse, and that its purport was to inquire whether it was her pleasure to hunt on that day. But no sooner had she cast her eye over the paper and read its contents, with the royal signature annexed, than she instantly comprehended the nature and extent of her misfortune. Conscious that if she could only gain access to the King, she could in a moment overturn the plans of her enemies, she sprung out of bed, and without waiting to put on anything except a petticoat and shoes, she rushed into the antechamber. There the first object which she met was Count Rantzau, seated quietly in a chair. Recollecting then her dishevelled state, she cried out,* 'Eloignez-vous, Monsieur le Comte, pour l'amour de Dieu, car je ne suis pas présentable!' She immediately ran back into her chamber, and hastily threw on some clothes, assisted by her women. On attempting a second time to leave her room, she found that Rantzau had withdrawn himself, but had stationed an officer in the doorway, who opposed her further passage. Rendered almost frantic by this insult, added to her distress, she seized him by the hair, demanding to see Count Struensee or the King. 'Madam,' said he, 'I only do my duty and obey my orders. There is no Count Struensee

* At this period, 1772, Count Rantzau was about sixty years of age; his features were good, his complexion florid, and when young he must have been very handsome, though he had a slight cast in his eye. He was near six feet high; his hair had turned grey through age, but to hide that unyouthful mark, the old beau used pomatum thickened with hair powder burnt black. His manners were highly polished; when he arrested the young Queen, he had on a scarlet surtout lined and trimmed with fur; a commander-in-chief's regimental coat beneath, red, turned up with buff; and under dress of silk.

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now, nor can your Majesty see the King.' Having pushed him aside, she advanced to the door of the antechamber, where two soldiers had crossed their firelocks in order to stop her progress. The Queen commanded them to let her pass, and added promises of reward if they obeyed. Both the soldiers fell on their knees, and one of them said in Danish, 'It is a sad duty, but we must perform it. Our heads are answerable if we allow your Majesty to pass.' As no man, however, dared to lay hands upon the Queen, she stepped over the muskets, which were crossed, and ran, half wild, along the corridor to the King's apartment. She even forced her way into it by violence; but her enemies, aware that she might try to gain admittance, and justly apprehensive of her influence over him, had taken the precaution of removing him, betimes, to another part of the palace.

"Exhausted by the agitation of her mind, and by such exertions of body, the Queen attempted no further resistance. She returned to her own chamber, where she was aided to dress herself,* and informed that she must instantly quit Copenhagen. Rantzau had the insolence to say to her, alluding to his gouty feet, 'Vous voyez, Madame, que mes pieds me manquent; mais mes bras sont libres, et j' en offrirai un à votre Majesté, pour l'aider à monter en voiture.'† She was then put into a coach, which waited for her at the door

* It was at this moment that the valet of Struensee is said to have been escorted *at his own request* to her apartment to recover his master's fur pelisse, which had been wrapped round her on leaving the ball-room; and it forms not the least strange episode of an unparalleled transaction, that the toilet of a Queen should have been actually proceeding in the apparently unheeded presence of not only this page, but of a room full of soldiers.

† Without exactly crediting the anecdote which ascribes to the irritated feelings of the Queen and the woman, the deserved reply to this

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near the chapel of the palace. Two ladies, a maid servant, the little princess her daughter, and a major in the Danish service, got into the carriage with her. They took the road to Cronenburg, a distance of about twenty-four miles, which, as they drove at a great rate, they soon reached, and in which fortress the Queen was confined."

"There was immured," writes a contemporary author, "in the gloomy mansions of guilt and horror, a Queen, whose personal charms and mental accomplishments would have melted into compassion the heart of a ruffian. In this inhospitable fortress she had not even been permitted to have the necessary clothes to prepare herself against the severity of the weather in this frozen region; nor was she indulged with more conveniences in her apartments than those granted to criminals of the lowest station, but treated with the greatest indignity by her unfeeling keepers and an insolent soldiery."

Nor did the wrongs of this unhappy Princess, or the injuries inflicted on her reputation and threatened against her life, end here. "In order to excite the populace against this illustrious and ill-fated victim, wretches had been hired to cry out 'Justice against Matilda!'—'*Vivat Regina Juliana!*' and in the emotions thus excited, the blind multitude went to the greatest excesses, pillaging and destroying above sixty houses, and breaking out into invectives against the unfortunate Queen, whom they had been taught to accuse of adultery and enormous crimes against the State and the King. To lend colour to the latter insinuations, and by way of appeasing the popular anxiety thus conjured up respecting the imbecile monarch's life, he

insolence, of a "*soufflet bien appliqué*," it is certain they found more dignified vent in well-founded reproaches, and predictions of a retributive fate which ere long overtook their object.

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was paraded, at noon of the day on which the arrests were made, in a coach drawn by eight milk-white horses, attended by Prince Frederick, (*significantly* styled in the account the *hereditary* Prince,) through the streets of the capital; which, in the evening, were brilliantly illuminated, as if in honour of some glorious victory over a foreign enemy, which had saved the country from ruin, amid the acclamations of the multitude. And lest the rage thus fomented should have given place (as it ere long did) to pity for the young victim of premeditated malice and treachery, whose fortitude under this terrible disaster was truly admirable, an order was issued in the name of the King for a public thanksgiving in all the churches of the capital, for the protection granted by the Almighty by watching over the safety of the King, the royal family, and the whole kingdom. The Senate, (or, rather, Council), composed, be it remembered, almost exclusively of the party who had conspired against the Queen, and to whom her return to power, or even vindication from criminal charges would have been instantly fatal, declared her, without any form of trial, guilty of adultery, and of being privy to the poison administered to her husband; and would probably have passed upon her Majesty a most iniquitous sentence, if Mr. Keith, the English minister, had not solemnly protested against all acts of violence with which the person of the Queen seemed to be threatened. He bravely vindicated oppressed innocence in a manner worthy of his character; refuted with much energy her accusers, and concluded with denouncing the vengeance of his nation, and the bombardment of Copenhagen, if justice were not done to the sister of his sovereign.* These menaces

* A significant, though less important consequence of them, may be traced in the permission for such ladies of the Queen's household as had not been dismissed, to rejoin her.

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suspended the immediate effect of a most precipitate and unparalleled judgment."

Such is the narration as extracted from an author, anonymous certainly, but on that account the more disinterested (his very name and publication being matter of curiosity and speculation to the Queen's *most devoted adherents*), of that unhappy Princess's critical situation, and the interposition in her behalf of the British minister. That it was not only warranted by the circumstances, but laudable and necessary, the prompt and flattering approbation of his Sovereign sufficiently testified; and though modern Denmark, happily exempted during the long peaceful reign of the son of Carolina Matilda, and by the now auspicious union of two once hostile branches of its Royal Family, from the tumults of faction, indignantly repels the idea of her life having been ever actually in danger, certain it is, that at the time a very different opinion prevailed. And when it is considered that the repeal of the act rendering adultery punishable with death, formed, with the mass of the people, the "head and front" of Struensee's offences,—and that to this crime was added the grave imputation of poisoning her husband (brought forward, though, without so much as the shadow of proof on her public trial)—from popular fury at least and the violence of faction, if not from the strict course of justice, Colonel Keith was warranted in apprehending the worst; and in stepping forward in the bold and novel manner (narrated from his own "Table-Talk" by a noble lady, one of his few remaining and highly gifted contemporaries), to the rescue of the sister of his sovereign.*

* We have the authority of the accurate Archdeacon Coxe, and that after two separate visits to the court of Denmark had given opportunity for the correction of erroneous first impressions, that the Queen, during her long imprisonment, was not only "uncertain of the fate that awaited

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"On hearing," writes this living chronicle of a long told tale, whose personal interest in its hero stamped the circumstances, as related by himself, indelibly on her vigorous memory, "that the Queen was seized, and a Council met to deliberate on her fate, and that *her life was considered in danger*,—Colonel Keith forced his way into the Council, and denounced war against Denmark, if a hair of her head were touched. This done, he despatched a messenger forthwith to England, and immediately locked himself and his household up till the answer should arrive. The answer *did* arrive" (from the state of the weather and roads, not for nearly four long weeks of harassing, but, as the following correspondence shows, of self-sustained and firmly encountered suspense) "in the shape of a huge square packet. It was placed in Colonel Keith's hands, and they trembled, and he shook all over as he cut the strings. The parcel flew open, and the order of the Bath fell at his feet! The insignia had been inclosed by the King's own hands, with a despatch commanding him to invest himself forthwith, and appear at the Danish Court."

The duplicate of this gracious despatch, addressed by the foreign secretary to a father, whose heart, no doubt, then swelled high (as even now, at the distance of seventy long years, does that of the writer of these pages) on its perusal, is happily extant, and bearing, as it does, a fresh testimony to the brotherly kindness, generosity, and delicacy of feeling of George III., as well as affording a most favourable specimen of the official correspondence of a by-gone period, it is with peculiar satisfaction subjoined.

her, but had reason to apprehend that the party who arrested her, meditated *still more violent measures*."

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LORD SUFFOLK, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TO R. KEITH, ESQ., HERMITAGE.

St. James's, February 28th, 1772.

SIR,

I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of acquainting you with the eminent merit of your son, his Majesty's minister at Copenhagen, and the honourable testimony his Majesty has been pleased to give of his approbation, by conferring on him the order of the Bath.

The ability, spirit, and dignity with which Sir Robert Keith has conducted himself in a very delicate and difficult position, has induced his Majesty to accompany the honour he bestows with very particular marks of distinction. He has made the nomination at a time when there was *no stall vacant*. The instrument expressly recites eminent services to have been the inducement. The dispensation with ceremonies is carried farther than usual. His Majesty has directed me to inform Sir R. Keith, that he chose the time *previous to the issue of his negotiation*, on purpose to distinguish his *merit, independent of his success;* and he has been pleased to signify that the whole is to be considered as his act, and that Sir R. Keith is not to inquire into the expenses of the present his Majesty has made.

The messenger who sets off for Copenhagen to-night, carries the insignia of the order to him, and his appearance with them at the Court where he resides, will be the first notice they will have of this signal grace from his sovereign.*

* Walpole (in one particular erroneously it will be seen) writes at the time:—"Mr. Keith's spirit in behalf of the Queen has been rewarded. The red ribbon has been sent him, though there was *no vacancy*, with

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You will allow me to offer my congratulations to you on this occasion, and to express the share I take in the pleasure this event will give to a gentleman, for whose public character I have always entertained the highest respect, though I have not the honour of being personally known to you.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

SUFFOLK.

The extension since given to an order, at that time limited to five-and-twenty knights, and confined to the highest grade of diplomatic or other special services, renders us very inadequate judges of the value of the boon thus announced, or of its effect on the mind and feelings of the negotiator, after the anxious suspense which it arrived so opportunely to relieve. But with this happy termination in view, it will be pleasing, as well as profitable, to accompany the yet unconscious object of royal favour through the long weeks of conscientious self-scrutiny which, while it would, under any conceivable result, have supported him, must yet have heavily taxed the moral courage of the lonely diplomatist, placed, as he truly says, in a situation of unparalleled and singular responsibility.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

[*Strictly confidential.*]

Copenhagen, Feb. 9th, 1772.

DEAR FATHER,

I need not tell you in what anxiety and distress I have passed these last three weeks, nor with what impatience I wait for letters from England. The roads

orders to put it on directly himself, *as there is no sovereign in Denmark to invest him with it*." This last reason, though almost implied by the novel mode adopted, is certainly not expressed.

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and weather are so bad, that I may still be a week before I receive answers to my first letters. In a most difficult situation I have endeavoured to act with moderation as well as firmness. My position is singular, perhaps unprecedented. I am satisfied in my conscience that I have neglected nothing my reach of judgment could suggest to me, and with that comfortable reflection on my side, I await the decision of my superiors, with the hope of their approbation. An abler man might have done better service; but my superiors will judge candidly, and he who has done his best and despises Fortune, may sleep in quiet.

You may be curious to know something of the fate of those men who brought on the late unhappy convulsion. Count Struensee is loaded with irons and (which is worse) with guilt, in a common prison in the citadel. Without knowing either the particulars of the accusations against him or the proofs, I believe I may venture to say that he will soon finish his wild career by the hands of the executioner. The treatment of Count Brandt in the prison, and the race he has run, bear so near an affinity to those of Struensee, that it may be presumed his doom will be similar. Never, never was blind ambition and presumptuous infatuation carried further than by these men, and their fate, though shocking, is by no means surprising. Good night to the Hermits. I am quite jaded with writing, having done nothing else from morning till night for above three long weeks, and alone too!

February 12th.

I am now in hourly expectation of a messenger, and I have cast about in my mind all the different sorts of orders * he may bring me. Allow me, dear Sir, to say

* Excepting probably the "Order" so gratifyingly conferred.

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to you (and before the decision of my superiors arrives), that having in the six-and-twenty days of my present confinement, recapitulated every incident of these eight months past, I would not, if it were in my power, *recall one step* I have taken, or *one word* I have either spoken or written. This is bold, but I declare it in the sincerity of my heart, and I am sure that you and the Hermits will believe me.

The order of chivalry* I mentioned in my former letters has been *abolished,* and three of the original knights are in the citadel, two of them chained to the floor. Struensee, I hear, is sullen and silent. Brandt, on the contrary, sings from morning to night, and talks perpetually of the players over whom he had the direction. All this gaiety, real or affected, procures him no pity, nor alters the opinion of the public, who look upon him as one of the most mischievous and cruel fellows that ever existed. Struensee must reflect with horror upon his abuse of unlimited power, and still more upon the irreparable injury he has done to all his benefactors. I could cry like a child when I reflect upon that part of the story!

Struensee's brother was formerly a professor of mathematics, settled at Lignitz in Silesia. I am informed that he resisted for near two years, the tempting offers made to him by his brother. At last, however, he joined him here in May last, leaving a wife and three children at Lignitz. He is a man of knowledge in every branch of mathematics, and from what I have seen of him, he is little made for the mad pursuits of ambition. He was a deputy in the Chamber of Finances, and in a few days after the date of the late Revolution was to have been raised to the post of *Ministre des Finances.* I do not know how, for his

* That of Matilda.

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heart has been proof against the solicitations and example of his worthless brother; but his accepting much larger sums of money than his services could have merited, makes me suppose that *his philosophy had given way*. Yet there is a sort of tenderness in everybody not to devote this man to absolute destruction and infamy, till the proof of his guilt is brought out. He teaches the officers geometry and fortification, as I am told, in prison; which shows at least that he enjoys some *sang-froid*. His wife never was at Copenhagen, and her lot at any rate is a hard one. Madame de —— and her husband are sent off without any settlement, but with express orders not to return. These husbands and wives who had little or no connexion together in days of prosperity must be very agreeable company to one another, in the shipwreck of their reputation and fortunes. Such a set of people have indeed put my *love of humanity* to a severe trial!

February 13th.

My secretary arrived yesterday, and (thank God!) the approbation of the first steps of my conduct *is as full as my heart could wish*. If there are truth and consistency in Denmark, I make no doubt of answering the expectations of my superiors, in bringing this affair to a tolerable issue. But I cannot be too much on my guard, for, indeed, my notions of right and wrong are widely different from those in this country. Heaven grant me success in my delicate negotiation, and then a clear riddance of such a mission! I wear my very soul to shreds by fretting at the disorder and mischief I see around me. The convulsions in this kingdom are endless, and the moments of interval without pleasure. You know M— Hall, that nasty, boggy, bare, and foggy, corner of the world. If I would exchange

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it against some kingdoms I have seen, with the obligation of governing them, may I be hanged and dissected! I have seen more mirth at a Scottish * Dredgy, than ever brightened the features of the best sort of people I have seen here. There may, and *must* be many good and valuable people in these dominions (their want of passions and temptations convinces me of it) but the cheerful, the affectionate, the independent, and sociable, come not within my ken. Basta, basta, God bless them I say, and sincerely too!

My secretary had instructions when in London to see my brother, Mr. Conway, the Drummonds, &c., *but he was despatched back to me the same day,* and saw nobody. I was sorry for this, for I long to know something of public and private occurrences at home. A man in Denmark is truly on a par with the *departed.*

February 14th.

I shall dispatch a messenger to England to-morrow, by whom this letter goes. I am happy to repeat to you that the goodness and condescension of my Sovereign towards me, amply repays all my trouble and anxiety. God grant that every thing may answer the wishes of so humane and worthy a prince! I have every reason to believe that the return of this messenger will remove in part the inquietude of my superiors, and justify my reliance upon my endeavours. My zeal is mixed with affectionate gratitude, and attachment, and such a sentiment is sure to be active, and ought to be useful. But I must not be too sanguine. My countryman † loves crooked and narrow paths: but I seize fast hold of him, and keep him in the

* Dinner after a funeral.

† The title in the cypher for Count Osten, the Foreign Minister of Denmark.

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King's highway. The Queen of Denmark enjoys perfect health in Hamlet's castle. I wish the punishment of her cruellest *enemies*, the late minister, and his associates, were over, that the heat of party might subside, and her Majesty's situation be altered for the better.

February 15th.

My perplexities increase by subterfuges and evasions, to which there is no end in this country. The result of this troublesome and afflicting business is not within my computation with such men as I have to deal with. My part shall be fair, firm, honest, and assiduous. Heaven grant that in a post or two I may be able to give a more pleasing account of my prospects.

Adieu, dear father, most affectionately.

R. M. K.

The extracts already given, studiously and conscientiously silent as they are, even to the most confidential of domestic circles, on the details of events too sacred then, and still, for official publicity, will suffice to show that the office of endeavouring to shield from the malice of faction the head of its destined victim, was at least no sinecure, and one that called as largely on the patience and temper as the firmness and dignity of the negociator. That its difficulties did not decrease, will be seen by the following correspondence.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

(*Confidential to the Hermits only.*)

Copenhagen, February 26th, 1772.

DEAR ANNE,

I never worked at the mines in Mexico; but I question if it is either a harder or a more comfortless life than that I have had for these six weeks. What precious metals I have dug out of my mine I shall be

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better able to tell you at the end of this letter; which, like all my last, is written by fits and starts, and may not be finished these ten days. I thank my father and you for your joint packet of 28th January, which has been a great comfort to me in the dearth of letters from England. At this critical time, the abominable Danish climate has choked up the roads and rivers with mountains of snow, so that the Lord knows when the posts may penetrate. I am uneasy for the impatient feelings of those in London, and I leave you to guess at my own anxiety. But I must try to lay aside my dismal tale, for thinking about it has worn me down, *mind and body*.

Feb. 28th.

Just as I was; no letters! but snow over the whole face of nature! Well! my purgatory has been in Denmark, and praise Heaven! it cannot last much longer!

March 1st.

Yesterday's post brought me my father's short note of February 7th. The news of the death of the Princess of Wales* affected me sincerely. You all know how much I thought myself honoured by the good opinion of that Princess, who, I am firmly persuaded, possessed as many intrinsic good qualities, and as much affability of temper as any lady in Europe. The distresses of our worthy Sovereign are indeed manifold; and if ever King deserved the tender affections of his subjects, as well as their obedience, we may say without flattery, that he is that King! For my own part, I shall think my life well spent, if all my efforts can (as I hope they will) alleviate the weight of *one* of his Majesty's late afflictions. But more of that hereafter.

* Widow of Frederick Prince of Wales, Father of George III.

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There are two remarks irresistibly suggesting themselves on this portion of Sir R. M. Keith's confidential correspondence, which, at the risk of somewhat interrupting its interest, it is impossible to suppress. First, that the panegyric of this honest and upright minister upon the Monarch whom in those essential qualities of character he resembled, was purely disinterested, and not influenced (as it might have been at a later period) by personal gratification, and the sense of distinguished benefits. No! while the master, as we have seen, acknowledged merit, independently of success, the servant eulogised his Sovereign, not as a benefactor but as a man; and had discernment to view the then little appreciated George III., as impartial posterity has since learned to regard him.

The other, and less pleasing subject of remark, is the impossibility of not connecting in some degree with the catastrophe of the 15th January, and the arrest of her daughter, (tidings of which reached London, "just as the levee was going to begin," on the 29th,) the death, on the 8th of February following, of her amiable and affectionate mother, the Princess, whose demise one who knew her well so feelingly deplored. Could the knell of a widowed parent, already in declining health, be more fatally or cruelly rung, than by seeing hurled from the summit of power, traduced in reputation, and menaced in life, the posthumous child whose smiles had consoled her under her early bereavement, and whose bridal wreath she had watered with prophetic tears? What mother does not feel as if she too must have died *heart-broken* under the blow? The particulars of the event are thus affectingly given in the chronicles of the day.

"The night before her Highness's departure, the King observed nothing particular in her, except that she

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embraced him with *greater warmth and affection* than usual. He afterwards retired with the physician, who told him her Highness would not outlive the morning, which determined his Majesty to stay there all night. He did not see his royal mother again, for she remained very quiet all the night, and gave no tokens of death till a few minutes before she expired, when she *laid her hand upon her heart*, and went off without a groan. His Majesty was then informed, and he came and took her by the hand and kissed it, and *burst into tears*." Speaking of this sad event, Walpole says: "The Princess Dowager died on Saturday morning. She could not be unapprised of her approaching fate, for she had existed upon *cordials alone* for ten days—from the time she had received the fatal news from Denmark; and died before she could hear again of her daughter."

While the feelings of her affectionate relatives in England were thus fatally tried, those of the royal captive, during two months of rigorous confinement in the solitude of the fortress, for which she had so suddenly exchanged the splendours of a Court, must have been cruelly put to the proof, and are said to have come nobly forth from the ordeal. In addition to the traits of benevolence and forgetfulness of self, before mentioned, of her sharing an already limited allowance of food and money with her fellow-sufferers, the following touching anecdote has been preserved. The governor, having requested her Majesty to withdraw her bounty from an officer who had been closely confined for some years in a remote turret, debarred from all human intercourse, on suspicion merely of having been accessory to the enlistment of Danish subjects in the service of a foreign power, the Queen made no other answer than the following line from Voltaire:—

"Il suffit qu'il soit homme, et qu'il soit malheureux."

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If such were her feelings of compassion and sympathy towards an unknown outcast, how cruelly must they have been lacerated on hearing, no doubt with all possible aggravations, the tidings of the rigorous treatment experienced in prison, and still more the barbarous sentence passed, and shortly afterwards executed on her late ministers Brandt and Struensee; men who, without ascribing to them the undue favour assumed by their joint enemies, had so lately been her associates, not only in political power, but privileged intimacy. "When," says her biographer, "her Majesty was informed of the tragical circumstances relating to the two noble criminals, she said to Miss Mostyn, her attendant maid of honour, 'Unhappy men! they have paid dearly for their attachment to their King, and zeal for my service!'"

A more selfish and less generous mind might have reversed the exclamation, on reflecting that the forfeiture of a crown had been her penalty for participation in their measures!

To these measures, and their consequence to their unhappy originators, we must now revert. "The Struensees and Count Brandt," says a contemporary, "exposed to the derision and outrages of the vilest of mobs, were conducted in unmanly triumph to the tribunal of their merciless judges. Worn out with fruitless interrogations, they were threatened with the terrors of the torture, under which confessions of crimes never committed, might possibly have been elicited."

Be that as it may, there were humiliating circumstances enough in Count Struensee's situation (enhanced as they must at every moment have been by contrast with his previous unexampled career of luxury and self-gratification) to prostrate a spirit more unyielding and

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resolute than that of this spoiled child of fortune. The second night of his incarceration, the valet, who was lodged in a room below his master, heard about midnight, heavy steps ascending the stairs, and a clank, as if of a heap of chains or fetters, thrown on the floor above his head. This disturbance filled him with terror, for his fears foreboded that these irons were for the Count, and he expected, in fear and trembling, the same treatment. Presently he heard the sound of hammers, as if rivetting on the fetters! In about half an hour the persons descended, and passed his door, which was some relief; but concern for his master, and perturbed dreams of his being beheaded and quartered, kept him in tears and agitation till the morning.

On proceeding with a heavy heart to the Count's apartment, the looks of the sentinels, who sorrowfully shook their heads, confirmed his apprehensions. Struensee strove to conceal his disgrace, covering his face with the bedclothes, but when the eyes of the master and man (both sunken with weeping) met, disguise was needless; and the valet saw with horror and dismay, that his master was chained to a massive iron staple driven into the wall, which passed through a swivel fixed to a thick ring that encircled his right ancle and left wrist, and so short as barely to allow him to sit on the front of the bed, the staple being fixed in the centre of the bedstead. The valet, from excess of grief, could scarcely speak—seizing Struensee's hand, he kissed it with respectful affection, and bathed with his tears the iron ring that encircled his master's wrist.

Horror-struck as was the unhappy minion of luxury when he first became a chained captive—summoning to his aid the philosophy of which, as natural to his temperament, he was wont to make a boast, ere Christian resignation slowly superseded her inefficient

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substitute, he gradually strove to adapt not only his bodily position to the length of his chain, but his mind to the dreadful circumstances of his situation. He began to take his meals with somewhat of an appetite; breakfasted at about nine on coffee and biscuits, at one he dined, took a glass of light wine and a cup of coffee, drank tea* about five or six, took no supper, but drank a glass of port and water. He was always very abstemious as to wines and spirits; at least after he was placed about the King. Everything furnished by the *restaurateur* for his use was carefully examined; even the bread was cut open, and the napkins shaken and held up to the light; and his meat was cut by his valet, not being permitted to use a knife, lest he should commit suicide.

So far, his fetters excepted, no unmanly endeavours seem to have been used by his enemies to deny him a measure of the comforts and decencies by which he had been so profusely surrounded; but after a time, for his more secure confinement, or (more correctly to define its object), for his greater punishment, he was removed from the officers' barracks to a room in the vallum (or ditch) behind the church; a small, low square apartment, with one small window in the corner, and scarcely fourteen feet square. The walls were bare; a pallet bedstead, and bed of the meanest kind, a table, a stove, and two chairs for the officers, formed the miserable furniture of this gloomy abode; but even here, as if to tantalize memory, the silver appendages beforementioned were suffered to "flout the dungeon's misery." He was now chained more closely than before, so much so, that it was with difficulty he could sit upright on the side of his bed; his faithful valet

* The reader must have been struck by the frequent mention (derived no doubt from England) of a refreshment then little known in Europe.

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suddenly dismissed, without even the melancholy satisfaction of any leave-taking; and the Count so inconsolably affected by his loss, as, (it is said,) to have attempted suicide, by forcing his silver fork down his throat. Yet here it was, in this abject, hopeless, and forlorn condition, that Religion first came to shed her mild light athwart his prison's gloom, and the still deeper darkness of his benighted mind; and from hence did the man who had entered a sensualist, a libertine, and a sceptic, emerge, under her salutary teaching, a convert, a penitent, and a Christian!

We have already alluded to the thorough relinquishment of his rooted scepticism, and gradual, but firm adoption of the great truths of Christianity, under the judicious guidance of Dr. Münter, the clergyman appointed by the Court to see and converse with him; and whose success derives additional weight from the determined reluctance (probably on that account) of his future convert, to lend other than a constrained attention to his supposed equally formal ministrations. Few interviews, indeed, had however taken place, ere the earnest solicitudes of the able pastor found their reward in the softened feelings and candid admissions of his judiciously-treated penitent, during a series of nearly thirty conferences, the detailed record of which, as happily preserved by the eminent divine* with whom

* As much of the authenticity and consequent usefulness of similar records depends on the character and qualifications of their narrator, the following tribute to Dr. Münter, by a most competent authority, is subjoined :—

"That he was a distinguished divine, an accomplished classical scholar, and popular author, as well as one of the most acceptable preachers of his day, is matter of history. But his fame as a writer and a theologian chiefly rests on his well-known publication containing an account of his interviews with the celebrated Count Struensee. I believe there is not a language in Europe into which that striking and instructive narrative

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they were held, is well worthy of perusal. A few of their most striking particulars can alone be given here. The spirit in which they found their object may be best and most shortly described in his own words, ushering in the celebrated confession* of faith, in which Struensee himself embodied the substance of their conversations:—

"You desire, my dear friend, that I should leave behind me my thoughts how I was induced to alter my sentiments in regard to religion. You have been a witness of it. You have been my guide, and therefore I am infinitely obliged to you. I satisfy your desire with so much the greater pleasure, as it will afford me an opportunity of recollecting the train of ideas, and impressions of mind, which have produced my present sentiments, and confirm my present conviction.

"My unbelief and aversion to religion were founded neither on an accurate inquiry into its truth, nor upon a critical examination of those doubts that are generally raised regarding it. They arose, as is *usual in such cases*, from a very general and superficial knowledge of religion on one side, and much inclination to disobey its precepts on the other; together with a readiness to entertain every objection against it."

Of the calm and gradual manner in which this state of mind (alas! so common among infidels) was exchanged for sober conviction, Struensee thus spoke towards the close of his life, when the happy change had been fully accomplished. "I knew that I must expect a clergy-

(worthy of the emphatic eulogy of Johnson on Burnet's conversion of Rochester) has not been translated."

* Of the authenticity of this document Dr. Münter says "It was written on sheets of paper furnished by the government, and signed by its functionaries as received from the prisoner;" and as to its *spontaneous* nature, "it was entirely drawn up in his instructor's absence, and delivered to him sheet by sheet, as finished, and carefully preserved by him."

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man to attend me by order of government; I therefore resolved to receive him civilly, and to hear him with decency and composure. I intended to declare to him, at the end of the first visit, that if he were ordered to see me frequently, he should be welcome; but I should beg of him not to entertain any hopes of converting me; for I was too well convinced of my own opinion, and should, therefore, never enter into any useless disputations. When you came, my dear friend, I immediately perceived that you had no intention to declaim to me in the style of a preacher, or to fill me with fears and terrors, and inflame my imagination. You only desired me, since the matter was of so great consequence, to examine into my own principles, and the evidence for Christianity. I found this reasonable, I had time to do it, and fancied I should, by this inquiry, discover that Christianity had no foundation, and convince myself more strongly of the truth of my principles.

"We began our conferences with great coolness; I read the books you gave me, though with diffidence, yet with attention. This did not continue long; and I could not help perceiving I had been mistaken. It can scarcely be believed how much it has cost me to acknowledge my error, with regard to myself, as well as with regard to you. It was a great victory over myself, to confess that my former principles were false. But" (and the admission carries peculiar weight from the lips of a convert, assuredly not easily "turned from darkness to light") "my conversion is, by the grace of God, thoroughly brought about. I have now examined Christianity with greater exactness than I ever did my old system; and by this examination I am convinced of its truth. I have done so while in health, and with all the reason I am master of. I tried every argument;

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I have taken my own time, I have not been in haste. I therefore will remain firm; neither my former principles nor new doubts shall henceforth stagger me."

Such were the resolutions of an intellect naturally strong, and peculiarly acute, as to the results of Christianity, thoroughly investigated, on the mind. Of its influence (more wonderful far) on the proud heart of one, utterly rebellious till then, under the teaching of misfortune, many affecting proofs are scattered over those interesting conversations, which, to be fully appreciated, should be read as a whole. It may be a guide to others in dealing with the infidelity which is fostered in the heart by immorality of life, to learn that it was by the pure precepts of the Gospel, and the morality of its blessed Founder—and the misgivings excited by their contrast with his own convenient maxims, and consequent profligacy of conduct—that Struensee was first led to admit their probably heavenly origin, and to give to the external evidences of Christianity his willing, nay, anxious consideration. His natural candour, and an amiableness of disposition which, however obscured by the errors of prosperity, manifested itself in the most affecting concern for the sufferings he had been the means of bringing on his friends, add peculiar interest to the steps of a "passing from death unto life," whose progress has seldom, if ever, been so minutely, as well as affectionately, detailed. And yet the reverend instructor dealt faithfully and conscientiously with his strange pupil, never extenuating (nor, indeed, was the penitent himself inclined to do so) his past flagrant vices; nor suffering him for a moment to substitute compunction or penitence for the sole ground of Christian hope—redemption through Christ. When he had brought him fully to embrace this, "there ensued," says Dr. Münter, "a scene which was moving to me

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beyond description. Never felt I such joy. Never have I been so sure of the happiness of having brought back a sinner from his errors! I shall never forget this solemn and joyful hour, and never cease to praise God for it."

One of the first and legitimate fruits of this apparently most sincere and deep conviction of the importance of religion manifested itself in concern, no longer for the temporal welfare merely, but spiritual condition of his former friends. "He wished much that those who had been seduced by him from virtue might have the same advantages." He said he had in this respect Count Brandt particularly in view, and added, "I hear that he is still very gay, but I imagine it would make a greater impression on his mind if he were told how my sentiments are altered. Though he has not been more virtuous than I have, yet he always had a better opinion of religion than I had. Would you be so kind as to go to him, and tell him how you find me, and beg him to be now at last a little more serious?" "I rather proposed," says Dr. Münter, "that he should charge the clergyman in attendance on Count Brandt with the message, and asked, 'Are you ready and inclined to do this?'" "Yes," said he, "bring Dean Hee to me, and I will beg this favour of him in your presence. I am not ashamed to confess what I am so well convinced of. I wish I had an opportunity to tell it to all my former acquaintance. Formerly I would not hearken to Count Brandt, when he sought opportunity to speak to me of religion. I think it therefore doubly a duty to let him know my present sentiments; since I have been accessory to his misfortunes. His condition grieves me so much, that I would willingly contribute all in my power towards his reformation."

On Dean Hee paying him the requested visit, he told

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him minutely how he had first quitted virtue, and then abandoned religion; and in what manner he had been recovered from his errors. His affecting solicitude was not lost upon Count Brandt, who, spite of great natural levity of disposition, had never been without a sense of religion; and who sent him in return his free forgiveness for all the evils he had drawn him into.

Struensee's amiable solicitude for the companion of his prosperity and misfortunes, seems long to have survived all anxiety respecting himself; and he could never forgive himself for having "kept Brandt from withdrawing from Copenhagen when he might have done so."

Another and yet tenderer earthly tie remained to be severed before the penitent could depart in peace. His virtuous and truly Christian parents survived, to add to the anxiety and terror with which they had learned his giddy elevation, the cruel tidings of his ignominious fall. From his father, a most highly respected and eminent divine, who, long previous to his son's favour, had risen by his own merits to the important situation of general superintendent (or bishop) of Schleswick and Holstein, he had, early in his confinement, received a heart-rending letter, some extracts of which will show how its perusal (which he was unable to finish), must have racked his then unsubdued heart and accusing conscience.

"The grief and anxiety of your parents on account of their sons,* I am not able to express. Our eyes swim in tears day and night. Our souls cry for mercy to God without ceasing. There is but one thing which lies heavy upon my soul, and that of your much afflicted mother. You know our sentiments. You knew our intention when we educated you. You remember how

* A brother of the Count had been arrested with him.

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often and how seriously we inculcated this great truth, that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things.' As often as I had opportunity to speak to you, even when you were a public character, I reminded you of the Omnipresent God, and exhorted you to be careful in preserving a good conscience. Your own heart will tell you how far you have lived up to the exhortations of your father.

"It is already a long while that your parents have been in great anxiety about you. Since we lead a very retired life, and you have ceased to write about your circumstances, the prayers and sighs of our straitened hearts have ascended to God in secret; and in our agony we cried that your soul might not be lost. Three different times, at Halle, Gedern, and Altona, you were looked upon as a dead man, by those who stood about your sick bed. God has saved you, and preserved your life, certainly with that only intent, to prepare you, in this season of grace, for a happy eternity. This is now the chief intention of your gracious Redeemer in your person. You are his creature, he loves you, you are redeemed by the blood of Jesus. God is a reconciled father; return then to your God, my son, he will not hide his gracious countenance from you. When you shall feel your sins to be a heavy burden, your heart will then humiliate itself before God; you will pray for mercy, and you will seriously detest and abhor your transgressions. You will then see the great importance and necessity of the redemption of Christ. You will then take refuge with Him who receives sinners, who was made to be sin for us, who has paid the debt of our sins, and suffered their punishment, that we might have forgiveness, according to the riches of his grace. The blood of Christ still speaks for you. He that is merciful yet stretches forth his hands. Without Jesus there

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is no salvation—oh that he might be glorified in your heart! In him we have happiness whilst we live, whilst we suffer, whilst we die—and after death itself!

"Your mother gives her love to you. She weeps, she prays with me for our unfortunate children. My son, my son, how deeply do you afflict us! O could we but have this comfort, that our sons turned with all their heart unto the Lord; and that we with joy might find them again in eternity before the throne of the Lamb! Your crimes, which brought you into prison, are not sufficiently known to us. But though we love our children, we nevertheless cannot approve their crimes, nor excuse nor palliate them; we can only praise God when he shall show mercy to the repenting sinner. The Lord our God be your physician in your imprisonment, and heal thoroughly the wounds of your soul. We, your parents, recommend you to the Lord that has mercy on you. Yea, Jesus! thou great friend of mankind, who wilt in no wise cast out him that comes unto thee, help parents and children to life everlasting!"

It would be difficult to refrain from ascribing, at least in part, to the prayers and example of parents thus eminently pious (for a letter from his disconsolate mother breathes sentiments equally religious and affecting), the singular and decided change which had taken place, not only in their son's opinions, but in his entire character and feelings; and which he expressed with touching humility in the following letter, to be delivered after his death. It ran thus:—

"Your letters have increased my pain, but I have found in them that love which you always expressed for me. The memory of all that sorrow which I have given you by living contrary to your good advice, and the great affliction my imprisonment and death must

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cause you, grieve me the more, since, enlightened by the truth, I see clearly the injury I have done. With the most sincere repentance I beg your pardon and forgiveness. I owe my present tranquillity to my belief in the doctrine and redemption of Christ. Your prayers and good example have contributed much towards it. Be assured that your son has found that great good which you believe to be the only true one. Look upon his misfortunes as the means which made him obtain it. All impressions which my fate could make upon you, will be weakened by this, as it has effaced them with me. I recommend myself to your farther intercession before God. I pray incessantly to Christ my Redeemer, that he may enable you to bear your present calamities. I owe the same to his assistance. My love to my brothers and sisters. I am, with all filial respect," &c.

"Next day," continues the doctor, "I came with Lieutenant-General Hoben, who, at my request, was present at his receiving the Sacrament; and this man, who received his sentence of death without any alteration of mind was, during the whole time of this sacred transaction, as if he were melting into tears. I never observed a tear in his eye as often as we were talking about his misfortunes and death; but on account of the moral misery into which he had thrown himself and others, and the love of God, he has wept more than I myself could have believed, had I not seen it."

Resigned and even cheerful had Struensee of late become on the subject of his own fate, now rapidly approaching. Dr. Münter says he had now for weeks past been blessed with unfeigned tranquillity of mind, which appeared to him more striking, the nearer the time of his death advanced. His deportment on receiving his sentence is thus described. "He was

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speaking of several things which concerned his heart, of his affections towards his parents and family, (he had shortly before taken a most affecting leave of his brother, whose probable escape from his own fate was a great relief to his mind,) when his counsel came into the room to acquaint him with his condemnation. 'Good Count!' said he, 'I bring you bad news.' He then pulled a copy of the sentence out of his pocket.

"'I expected,' said the Count, 'nothing else; let me see it.' He read; I fixed my eyes upon him with great attention, but I did not observe the least alteration in his countenance. After he had read it, he gave it to me. While I was reading it and trembling, he began to talk with composure to his counsel, and asked with eagerness respecting the fate of Count Brandt. On learning that his sentence was exactly the same, and that his counsel had been unable to procure its mitigation, the Count was more moved at this than at his own fate. When we were alone, I assured him of my sincere compassion, and exhorted him to suffer with the patience and submission of a Christian.

"'I assure you,' said he 'I am very easy about that. Such punishments should make an impression upon others, and therefore they ought to be severe. I had prepared myself for this, and more. I thought I might, perhaps, be broken on the wheel, and was already considering whether I could suffer this sort of death with firmness. If I have deserved it, my infamy would not be removed though those disgraceful circumstances were not annexed to it. And upon the whole, what is honour or infamy in this world, to me. My judges had the law before them, and therefore they could not judge otherwise. I confess my crimes are great. Many things I might not have done, had I been sufficiently acquainted with the law. But why did I neglect it?'"

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To the sentence itself, we must now revert. Count Struensee was pronounced guilty of having embezzled from the King's coffers near six *lors* of gold, or £125,000 sterling; of having expedited many orders from the cabinet without the King's knowledge; of an unbecoming familiarity with the Queen; of having secreted several letters which should have been laid before the King; of having counselled the King to disband his guards; of forging and falsifying a draft, and of suspicious arrangements in the city.

Count Brandt was declared guilty of having been privy to Struensee's free intercourse with the Queen, and all his other supposed crimes, without divulging them; of having laid violent hands upon the King's person, and also of evil designs against his Majesty.

That these charges were vague and frivolous, and could never, especially in the case of Count Brandt, have been construed into capital crimes, except by a tribunal determined on his destruction, is sufficiently obvious. But their futility is rendered still more apparent when it is explained that the treasonable attempt on the King's life, which formed the head and front of this unhappy minion's offence, consisted in having engaged, expressly to gratify his royal master's propensity to pugilism, in a wrestling or boxing encounter, in which he had the misfortune slightly to wound his antagonist; though the trifling injury was not only freely forgiven at the time, but the culprit continued as before in the enjoyment of the sovereign's favour.

These several accusations, however, put together, were considered as amounting to high treason, and punishable by the Danish law with forfeiture, confistion, and death. The sentence of Struensee ran thus:—

"John Frederick Struensee has (agreeable to the

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Danish statute law, book vi. chapter iv. article 1, for his crimes, forfeited his honour, estate, and life. His coat-of-arms shall be broken by the common executioner. His right hand shall be cut off, and afterwards his head; his body shall be quartered, and exposed on a wheel; his head and hand to be placed on a pole, and fixed over the gates."

A like sentence was passed on Count Ernevoldt Brandt. In consequence of this rigid decree they were executed on the 28th of the same month (April), at eight in the morning, before the east gate of the city of Copenhagen, in the centre of a field, on a scaffold erected for the purpose.

The deportment of Count Brandt, who suffered first, was quite in conformity with the accounts already given of his reckless and daring character, and thoughtless behaviour while in prison. "He showed," says a contemporary narrative, "great heroism, and almost unparalleled coolness while his hand was cut off, and went through the rest of his sentence with amazing intrepidity; making a speech to the bystanders, protesting his innocence, and declaring his accusers suborned and perjured. His head was then exposed various times to the view of the spectators. He was attended by a Lutheran minister, but gave no sign of fear or contrition." *

Very different, and to the more unthinking multitude, perhaps less heroic, nay even pusillanimous, might have appeared the last moments of Struensee. Having with his usual frankness (even while expressing the

* It is consolatory to know, on the testimony of that honest ecclesiastic, that, notwithstanding his outward bravado, and the acknowledged levity of his earlier prison hours, Brandt had been brought to a contrite sense of his guilt before God. Yet it is impossible not to view, as in some measure characteristic of the value and solidity of the two conversions, the government tokens bestowed on the two divines employed; that to Dr. Münter being a snuff-box of *rock crystal*, while a similar gift to Dean Hee, was of *porcelain* alone!

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calmest and best-grounded reliance on the Divine mercy) acknowledged to Dr. Münter a natural dread of death, which he feared might manifest itself on the scaffold, he was confirmed by the counsels of that excellent adviser in the resolution to affect neither pagan stoicism nor infidel recklessness, but to show himself exactly as he felt; and meet death, not with the triumphant front of innocence, but the meekness of repentant guilt and the serenity of a pardoned offender.

Their final conversation, like all those which had preceded it, is well worthy of detailed perusal. Its most striking features only can be given here.

"I look," said the dying penitent, "upon the reconciliation of man through the death of Christ, as the only means of receiving forgiveness of sins. Everything else which is believed to serve the same purpose is insufficient. Whoever will not adopt and make use of this redemption, declares that he will neither be virtuous nor fear God; for he rejects the strongest motives which God could ever propose to mankind to fear him and love virtue. I know what God has done for me, and what it has cost Christ to procure my salvation; and I look upon my death, and all those awful circumstances that are to attend it, as things which God found necessary for my good."

With these sentiments, to which the total absence of hypocrisy in his character, as well as the testimony of the most credible of witnesses, and his own still extant and memorable confession, lend the stamp of undoubted genuineness, did this once hardened sceptic and libertine proceed to meet the fate, whose justice he acknowledged, and whose details can never be so interestingly given as in the words of his faithful and indefatigable, and now deeply affected spiritual guide.

"The door of the prison," says Dr. Münter, "now opened, towards which the Count never, but I very often,

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had looked with a fearful expectation. An officer came in, and desired me, if I pleased, to step into the coach, and go before the Count to the place of execution. I was much moved. The Count, as if it did not concern him in the least, comforted me by saying,

"'Make yourself easy, my dear friend, by considering the happiness I am going to enter into; and with the consciousness that God has made you a means of procuring it for me.'

"I embraced him, recommending him to the love and mercy of God, and hastened to the place of execution. He, being soon afterwards called, got up from his couch, and followed those who were to conduct him. Coming out of the prison, and getting into the coach, he bowed to those who were standing around. Upon the way to the place of execution, he partly spoke to the officer who was with him, partly sat in deep meditation.

"As soon as both the condemned were arrived, in their respective coaches, near the scaffold, and Count Brandt had mounted it first, I got into the coach with Struensee, and ordered the coachman to turn round, to prevent his having a prospect of the scaffold.

"'I have seen *him** already,' said he. I could not recollect myself so soon, and he, observing my uneasiness, said, with a smiling countenance, 'Pray, do not mind me. I see you suffer. Remember that God has made you an instrument in my conversion. I can imagine how pleasing it must be to you to be conscious of this. I shall praise God with you in eternity that you have saved my soul.'

"I was still more affected than before, and said, that

* It is pleasing to trace, in this *unselfish* expression, at a moment when all dissimulation ceases, a touching relic of the deep and *paramount* concern Struensee had experienced for the friends he had involved in ruin.

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I should look upon this transaction of mine as the most remarkable one during my whole life, since God had blessed it with so self-rewarding a success. It was a pleasing thought to me, that we should continue our friendship in a future world. I should have comforted him, but he, in this case, comforted me. He then desired me to remember him to several of his acquaintance, and to tell some of them, that if he, by his conversation and actions, had misled them in their notions of virtue and religion, he, as a dying man, acknowledged the injury he had done, begged them to efface those impressions, and to forgive him.

"On seeing the great number of spectators, I told him that among those thousands were many who would pray to God to have mercy on him. 'I hope so,' said he, 'and the thought pleases me.' He soon after added, 'It is a solemn sight to see so many thousands of people together; but what are these thousands, when compared with the whole sum of God's creatures, and how very little appears one single man in such a comparison! Nevertheless, God loves every individual man so much, that he has procured his salvation by sacrificing his own Son. What a love is this!'

"Though I could not see the scaffold, yet I guessed, from the motion among the spectators, that it was Struensee's turn to mount it. I endeavoured to prepare him for it by a short prayer, and within a few moments we were called. He passed with decency and humbleness through the spectators, and bowed to some of them. With some difficulty he mounted the stairs. When we came up, I spoke very concisely, and with a low voice, these words of Christ, 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' It would have been impossible for me to speak much, or aloud, had I attempted it.

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"I observe here that he showed not the least affectation in his conduct on the scaffold. It was that of one who knew he was to die, on account of his crimes, by the hands of the executioner. He was pale, it was difficult for him to speak, the fear of death was visible in his countenance; but at the same time submission, calmness, and hope, were expressed in his air and deportment.

"His sentence was read to him, his coat-of-arms publicly exhibited, and broken to pieces. During the time that his chains were taking off, I put the following questions to him, 'Are you truly sorry for all those actions by which you have offended God and man?'

"'You know my late sentiments on this point, and I assure you they are at this very moment the same.'

"'Do you trust in the redemption of Christ as the only ground of your being pardoned before God?'

"'I know *no other* means of receiving God's mercy; and I trust in this alone.'

"'Do you leave the world without hatred or malice against any person whatsoever?'

"'I hope nobody hates me personally, and my sentiments on this head are the same as I told you just before.'

"I now laid my hand upon his head saying, 'Then go in peace whither God calls you! His grace be with you!'"

"He then began to undress, and inquired of the executioners how far he was to uncover himself, and desired them to assist him. He then hastened towards the block, that was stained, and still reeking, with the blood of his friend, laid himself quickly down, and endeavoured to fit his neck and chin properly into it. When his hand was cut off, his whole body fell into

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convulsions.* The very moment when the executioner lifted up the axe, I began to pronounce slowly the words 'Remember Christ crucified, who died, but is risen again.' Before I had finished these words, both hand and head, severed from the body, lay at my feet!"

* * * * * *

It is impossible to follow to the tragical close of his singular career, a man whose name has become inseparably blended with the history of a kingdom, and the destinies of a queen, without echoing the remark of his clerical biographer, that if his political schemes had been crowned with success, posterity might have hailed him as the Solon of Denmark, and his private vices, great and undeniable as they were, might have been forgotten in the fame attendant on successful statesmanship. His sudden fall from power, and ignominious death, on the contrary, while they have led to his being handed down to future generations as a profligate adventurer, proved to himself (and it is hoped to others also), the happy instruments of a transition equally striking, and far more important, from a hardened and reckless infidel, to a penitent and devout Christian.

The malice of the enemies he had so fully and frankly forgiven, found savage gratification in the exposure of the mangled remains of their lately powerful foe. Tall poles long exhibited to a shuddering public the heads of the two unfortunate Counts, whose quartered limbs were extended on wheels, beneath the ghastly skulls that bleached in the wind above them.

* On this purely physical affection have been founded (on the admission of those least favourable to his memory) some accounts representing him as struggling to escape the fatal stroke.

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The trial of the Queen was meantime (with the slowness and secrecy ascribed in some of Sir R. Keith's letters to Danish judicial proceedings, and by which, on this occasion, his anxieties were evidently deeply awakened), going on. "And the Queen Dowager," says the often quoted author of the Memoirs of an Unfortunate Queen, "having attained her objects in the removal of all bars to her resumption of former ascendancy, affected to wish that the tribunal instituted to prosecute the young Queen would declare her innocent; and in order further to impose on the public, advised the King to engage the celebrated advocate Uhhldahl in this important cause, and to absolve him of his oath, that he might plead in her favour, with all the eloquence of which he was master.

"But the world would not be duped by this artifice. Whoever was acquainted with the principles and views of the King's advocate, knew that he was the soul of Juliana Maria's party, and that the secret object of the selection was to persuade the nation that if the eloquence of so able a defender could not establish her innocence, she must needs be guilty.

"Not all the florid declamations, however, and practised rhetoric of this famous pleader, thus indirectly exerted against her, could even fix a suspicion of the crimes invented to cover with infamy the unhappy Queen. All the accusations against her Majesty were destitute even of probability; and thus the nefarious plan of having the forlorn Matilda degraded and punished with death, and her children declared illegitimate, proving abortive, the Dowager, dreading at the same time the just resentment of the King of Great Britain, and of a generous nation, ever ready to succour the oppressed innocence of a princess, born and educated in her bosom,—was induced to commute her

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intended sentence to perpetual imprisonment, at the extremity of the frozen deserts of Jutland."

Thus wrote, and *unchallenged,* at a period, too (that of Caroline Matilda's recent demise), when, if ever, her enemies might have come forward to blacken successfully her already tarnished fame, an unknown champion, more zealous and disinterested than the wily advocate above alluded to; and, though we may so far dissent from him as to admit that suspicion had some scope for its exercise, in the contempt for appearances unfortunately characteristic of the youthful sovereign, yet, as nothing amounting to proof could be elicited, even from perjured and suborned testimony,* the opinion (entertained and avowed throughout by her misguided consort) of her innocence, must be considered most compatible, not only with charity, but with truth.†

"The King," adds the above writer, "who was chiefly interested in this iniquitous prosecution, so far from accusing her of infidelity, and other crimes still more atrocious, declared more than once that she was worthy of a husband more disposed than himself to do justice to her charms and virtues; while the generous

* Sarti, the composer, who had been music-master to the Queen, voluntarily informed a lady of rank who met him twenty years subsequently at Vienna, that no pains had been spared to tamper with and induce him to calumniate his royal pupil; but that, so far from having any such testimony to give as had been sought to be extorted from him, her conduct—which he had ample opportunities of being acquainted with—was marked by the most perfect propriety and decorum; and he utterly repudiated the idea of her guilt.

† "The common report," says Adolphus, "was that the articles supposed to be proved were sent to London, and submitted to the examination of the most eminent civilians; who, though consulted separately, unanimously declared that the evidence, far from amounting to legal conviction, did not sanction a presumption of guilt; and they added, they did not only refuse credit to the facts as lawyers, but were obliged to disbelieve them as men."—*Adolphus's Reign of George III.*, vol. i., page 524.

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avowal of his excesses and irregularities justified the indifference and disgust she had long testified towards him. If she could, during her confinement, have obtained an interview with him, it is not to be doubted that her Majesty would have compelled him to have made her due reparation for the injuries she had received. The Dowager, however, constantly prevented all intercourse between them, being certain that the Queen would have recovered her liberty, and made her enemies repent of their injustice, had she been confronted with the King." *

Letters, insisting, in the most impassioned terms, on being permitted to defend herself in a personal interview with the deluded monarch, purporting to be addressed both to him and to Sir Robert Murray Keith, are given in the publication already quoted; but as, however naturally and forcibly expressed, probability is against their having (even if genuine) been permitted to transpire, their insertion amid matter unquestionably authentic, is inadmissible.

Certain it is, however, that the exertions of the latter, either in his own person,or with her illustrious brother, on her behalf, needed not the stimulus of these pathetic remonstrances; as his correspondence, shortly to be resumed, after an interval of enforced and diplomatic silence, will sufficiently prove. That these efforts to ameliorate the condition, and effect the liberation of the royal captive, were attended with incredible

* "The King," says the same dispassionate writer already quoted, "was with great difficulty prevailed upon to sanction their measures: a moment's interview would have frustrated all their plans, and rolled back the stream of ruin upon themselves."—*Adolphus's Reign of George III.* Walpole (alluding to the proposed act of divorce) says, that if obtained, it would probably be an *unique* instance of one passed without the consent of *either party*.

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difficulties, and every artifice of chicane, perhaps only enhances the merit of the indomitable champion who ultimately triumphed over both. That it was, while yet only partially successful, fully appreciated at home, the following, as well as preceding letters will show.*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

March 6th.

My business affords me such incessant occupation that I can seldom indulge myself in the pleasure of chatting with you. I am again to dispatch a messenger to London *to-day*, who will carry this, and I wish I could add to it the assurance of as happy an issue in my affairs as the justice, moderation, and rights of my Sovereign entitle him to expect, and which my most zealous services have endeavoured to procure. I hope and believe that matters are getting into a proper train, but I speak *with diffidence in Denmark*, and what would admit of no debate in any other country, is here matter of endless chicane and difficulty. I have, indeed, had hard cards to play, but my conscience tells me that I have made the most of them, and I firmly trust that my Sovereign and my superiors will be of the same opinion. I am jaded to a degree that is not to be conceived, but my health is otherwise good. If I could shut the clasps of Hugo Grotius and all his kin for the next six months, I should be at the summit of human felicity.

* That this appreciation was not confined to the highest quarters appears from contemporary periodical articles in which, under the title of the "heroic minister," the chivalry of this subject is enthusiastically celebrated. A more touching testimony of the national sympathy for the royal captive, was given to the editor, by the gifted surviving daughter of the then Premier of England, whose very nursemaids (in common with those of humbler households) were filled with commiseration and anxiety for Queen Matilda's impending fate.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

Copenhagen, April 25th.

DEAR FATHER,

You are, no doubt, surprised at my long silence, which I own proceeds from a very extraordinary cause, that of having *too much to say*. You have seen by the distinguished marks of favour bestowed upon me, how far, in the estimation of Royal beneficence, upright intentions supply the place of successful services. I am indeed overwhelmed with the daily tokens of goodness and condescension, which far exceed my merits or expectations. They cannot add to my zeal, but they interest every faculty of my mind, and every feeling of my heart in the success of the business entrusted to my charge. I am glad to hear from Sister Anne that you intend, as soon as the weather permits, to offer at the feet of our royal benefactor the thanks of your whole family. It is a grateful duty, and in you, dear sir, a becoming one. An old and faithful servant who, from an honourable retirement, the recompense of his labours, returns to the presence of his Sovereign with new acknowledgments for favours conferred on his children, will be heard with pleasure by the most humane of Princes. Honesty and gratitude are the fair inheritance you have entailed upon your sons, and whatever efforts can be expected from such motives, joined to the warmest zeal in the King's service, shall not be wanting.

They were at length, thanks to another vigorous and promptly-answered appeal to the long disregarded feelings of the British nation, crowned with complete success. "The English Minister," says a contemporary writer, "whom the King had created Knight of the

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Bath, as an honourable recompense for his zeal, and as a mark of approbation for his conduct, received his letters of recal; and the menaces of England, which became serious, as appeared by a formidable naval armament, compelled the regency of Denmark to consent to deliver up the young Queen to Sir Robert Keith, who was appointed to accompany her into the electorate of Hanover, as the castle of Zell had been allotted her by her royal brother, for her residence."

Sir Robert Keith having obtained the requested stipulations, and a pension of £5000 a-year towards the support of her Majesty's household and dignity, all thoughts of hostility between the two kingdoms subsided.

That it was no idle threat which the British Minister held out to enforce his just demands, will appear from the subjoined official document, showing how fully prepared the British government had been to lend him their active support.

St. James's, May 1*st*, 1772.

SIR,

For your own information I inclose a list of the ships which were intended to enforce the demand of the Queen of Denmark's liberty, if it had been refused. Those from Plymouth would have been sailed, if the countermand had been a few hours later than it was. The others were just ready to proceed to the Downs, and the *whole fleet* would probably have, by this time, been on their way to Copenhagen, under the command of Sir Charles Hardy.

I am, with great truth and regard,
Sir, your most obedient humble servant,
SUFFOLK.

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LORD SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, May 1st, 1772.
[*Duplicate.*]

SIR,

Your dispatches by King, the Messenger, have been already acknowledged; those by Pearson were received on Wednesday afternoon, and I now answer both together.

His Majesty's entire approbation of your conduct continues to the last moment of your mission, and his satisfaction has in no part of it been more complete, than in the manner in which you have stated, urged, and obtained the liberty of his sister. The care you have taken to distinguish between a claim of right, and the subjects of negociation, and to prevent the mixture of stipulations with a demand, is perfectly agreeable to your instructions.

The national object of procuring the liberty of a daughter of England, confined in Denmark, after her connexion with Denmark was dissolved, is now obtained. For this alone an armament was prepared, and therefore, as soon as the acquiescence of the Court of Copenhagen was known, the preparations were suspended, that the mercantile and marine interests of this kingdom might be affected no longer than was necessary by the expectation of a war.

Instead of a hostile armament, two frigates and a sloop are now ordered to Elsinore. One of them is already in the Downs, the others will repair thither immediately, and as soon as the wind permits, they will proceed to their destination. I inclose to you an account of them, which you may transmit to Monsieur Ostein ministerially, referring at the same time to the assurance of their pacific proceedings.

The compliance of the Danish Court with his Ma-

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jesty's demand, however forced, is still a compliance. Their continuing, unasked, the style of Queen, and other concessions, and the attainment of the national object, accompanying each other, His Majesty would think it improper to interrupt the national intercourse from any personal or domestic consideration. You will therefore inform Monsieur Ostein, that his Majesty intends to have a Minister at the Court of Copenhagen, the explanation you may give of this suspension of former directions, and his determination, being left to your own discretion.

You will not be that Minister. His Majesty will have occasion for your services in a *more eligible situation.** And as soon as you have discharged your duty to the Queen of Denmark, by attending her to Stade, you will return home, either on board of his Majesty's ship which conveyed you thither, or if the passage by sea is disagreeable to you, by land with the least possible delay.

The feelings of the negociator, by whose firmness to his purpose and well-timed demonstrations the horrors of war had been averted from two kingdoms, while the object of so many anxieties had been honourably achieved, may be best gathered from his own words.

[*Strictly Confidential.*]

Copenhagen, May 4th, 1772.

MY DEAR ANNE,

After a long and painful warfare, I hope I may at last look forward with pleasure to the end of my bondage in Denmark. During the last two months, I have, from *duty and discretion*, suspended all private correspondences, because I would rather hold my

* Sir R. M. Keith kissed hands 14th August, on his appointment to *Vienna*.

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tongue than seem mysterious. What my feelings have been in that period, no pen can paint; what my gratitude is, and ought to be towards the most considerate and benevolent of masters, no tongue can tell. I have not the presumption to think that I have deserved his distinguished favours and approbation, but my conscience tells me (and I listen to it with an honest exultation) that all my faculties have been invariably exerted in his service.

A ribbon and a title are pretty playthings, and I am not philosopher enough not to be flattered with them; but it is the *time* and the *manner* of bestowing them which enhance their value a thousand fold. At a moment when my mind was filled with regret for the past, affliction for the present, and anxious prospects in futurity, to find the uprightness of my intentions rated as highly, and recompensed as amply, as successful services, was equally unexpected and satisfactory. The world says that such marks of favour do infinite credit to the servant. I am sure they set the heart of the beneficent sovereign in the fairest and most amiable light. But I need not expatiate on the chapter of thankfulness. The Hermits understand that matter perfectly.

I have not yet received my ultimate orders, but I am nearly certain that they will direct me to embark at Elsinore, in the suite of her Majesty, who is to be conveyed from Cronenbourg to Stade by sea, and from thence to proceed immediately to a hunting seat of the King's in the Duchy of Lunenburgh, called the Görde, where her Majesty is to pass the summer. Her Majesty's winter residence in the King's electoral dominions will, in the mean time, be fitted up for her reception.

To demand the liberty of a captive Queen, and to

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escort her to a land of freedom, is truly such a commencement of my chivalry as savours strongly of the romantic! I am heartily grieved for the occasion which has laid this duty upon your brother; but from what you know of his disposition, you will easily judge of the warmth of his zeal in the execution of a commission so well adapted to his genius. Can you figure to yourself what he must have felt in passing through the vaulted entrance of *Hamlet's Castle*, to carry to an afflicted and injured Princess the welcome proofs of fraternal affection, and liberty restored?*

I have room to hope that my royal master will not be displeased with the conclusion of this critical and delicate affair; and when I have set her Majesty safely down in the comfortable retreat which his goodness has assigned her, I shall return as soon as possible to his presence, not to claim new benefits, but to offer my services, wherever they can be judged in any degree useful. And if on my arrival in the capital, *of the best of all possible kingdoms*, I have the happiness to find my father in good health, and my brother in an honourable station,† that city (large as it is) will contain few happier men than myself. We enthusiasts have, now and then, such moments as surpass all the enjoyments of wiser and graver men; and, to say the truth, we earn them dearly!

May 5th.

I am so prodigiously tired of this town, that I count

* The emotion was reciprocal. "When the English minister at Copenhagen," (Sir Robert Murray Keith) says Coxe, "brought the order for her enlargement, which he had obtained by his spirited conduct, she was so surprised with the unexpected intelligence, that she burst into a flood of tears, embraced him in a transport of joy, and called him her deliverer."

† Admiral Sir Basil Keith, shortly afterwards appointed to the government of Jamaica.

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the hours till my deliverance is completed. In this I am guilty of no ingratitude, since, in the long eleven months I have sojourned in it, I never met with a single glimpse of cordiality or kindness from a native of it. I know that I stand well in *this* public opinion; but I cannot find in my heart to be proud of it. Fire and water are not more opposite in their natures than these people and your brother; yet he may honestly say, that far from doing harm, or even wishing it, to any one individual, he has rendered the bulk of them essential service. I claim little merit in this; my motives were independent of every national consideration, and there is nothing very flattering in the earnest desire I have to quit them for ever. The Lord knows where I shall pitch my tent next, but I pray that it may be among a nation of warm feelings; for cold and callous hearts are to me worse than poison. But enough of these people, against whom I have no rancour, and with whom I have no more intimacy than with the inhabitants of Siam. And now for affairs nearer home. You will easily guess what a ruinous trade I drive, furnishing a house, and setting up a family, *once a year*, and then selling off at an hour's warning, and a quarter price. But my master is as generous as he is humane, and will secure me a competence somewhere; and let me tell you, sister Anne, that however scanty may be my worldly means, I have a set of kind comrades and dear creatures, not one of whom I would part with for Lord Clive's Jaghire. In the estimation of common sense and sound reason, I am literally one of the richest men you know, and my wealth is doubled by the just sense I have of its superior value. Every man should cast up his accounts this way, and we should have less grumbling about *certain metals*, which we Keiths have the pride to look down upon.

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May 9th.

I am, my dear sister, in the very agony of expectation, seeing that in all probability I may look for my complete clearance in the course of twice twenty-four hours. To get honourably released from such business as I have had in hand, and happily out of Denmark, are matters of the highest moment, and (as the ingenious Mr. John Home says) I stand at present upon the very "isthmus" of the critical instant. Yet I have no anxieties about *self*, and if my worthy sovereign is pleased, I am more than rewarded. And now, dear Anne, I must lay you aside, as the chit-chat companion who leaves the room when men of business enter.

May 15th.

My frequent journeys to Elsinore, to pay my duty to the Queen, have prevented my continuing this; but I now take up the pen to acquaint you that my ultimate orders have arrived, and are such as I expected. The most honourable testimony of my gracious Sovereign's approbation of my whole conduct accompanies them, and completes my satisfaction. In about eight days we may expect the convoy, and her Majesty will embark immediately. The King has had the goodness to order that the "Southampton" man-of-war shall convey me from Stade to England, if my health permits my continuing the voyage by sea. Poverty calls loudly for my preferring this conveyance, by which a large sum will be saved, and, *for once*, I will do my best to listen to her advice. Yet if I am as sick as I have constantly been on board ship, I do not answer for my perseverance. But adieu, Mrs. Anne, I have business with your betters. *Apropos*—put me in mind to give you an account of my travels in Sweden, where I was about a fortnight ago. A kingdom more or less is but a trifle in the peregrinations of such a knight-errant as I am;

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yet it may be uncivil to the memory of that romantic hero, Charles XII., to pass his realms over in silence.

May 19th.

I really believe that all my home correspondents have taken it into their heads that I departed from Denmark by some aërial conveyance, for the deuce a line do I receive but from my worthy superiors, and their epistles (though *inimitable in their way*), are politics, politics, and of them my mind is already brim full. Oh! for a sheet of female nonsense to refresh my spirits, and sweeten the labours of a plenipo! Doctor —— brought me a pretty little restorative of my father's handwriting, and the dose, though small, did me a world of good. If these obstinate easterly winds would relent, I might be looking out for my little armada, and in eight-and-forty hours after I might set out to plough the watery main. "To plough! to p—ke! aye, that's the rub!" Yet, to say the truth, this is a country from whose bourne no traveller departs with sorrow. *I*, at least, shall not be that sorrowful traveller, and if ever I set foot—but mum; I mean harm to nobody; but I long for St. Paul's!

What an awkward figure shall I make amidst the lively and laughing friends I am preparing to meet with! The muscles of my physiognomy have (to the best of my knowledge) lost their risible faculty, for when they were last tried in that way is truly past my remembrance. But I'll take a month's *private lessons of Tatty*, and leave the rest to Nature. This long manifesto of mine begins to grow very ancient, but be of good cheer, my dear Anne, the messenger shall mount his steed on Saturday, and carry with him the last shreds of my negotiation. You have heard that the Swiss die of the *maladie du pays*. I am no Swiss, but I pine prodigiously, and grow almost as lean as sister Janet. Remember, I make a bargain with you

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all, Hermits and others. For the first twelve months I will not permit my mind or memory to peep over into the Danish islands in quest of answers to your idle questions. I give you *carte blanche* as to all my other kingdoms, as Hungary, Bohemia, Prussia, Sweden, and Electorates and Republics without end. These are food for the curiosity of one year at least, and I only desire to let the descendants of Hengist and Horsa rest in peace. Adieu.

May 21*st.*

The last post brought me yours. What you say of being so long in the dark as to everything beyond my bare existence, is very true, but I repeat to you that no part of my duty was more necessary (or more painful) than the silence I persisted in to all private correspondents. Discretion is not a very common quality, even among ministers, but I am morally certain that the persons more immediately concerned in this delicate affair are highly satisfied with that part of my conduct. Their approbation is carried down to the last moment, and in the strongest terms.

Elsinore, May 24*th*, 1772.

Here I am, my dear Anne, thank my stars, upon the utmost verge of Denmark. My ships are not yet arrived; but a few days may conclude the whole affair, and the weather is mild and agreeable. I return to Copenhagen this evening, but only for a day or two, to wind up my bottoms, and give my parting advice to the little secretary, in whose success as a *chargé d'affaires* I take a particular interest. I know nothing of my own future distinction; but I must be a gainer by every possible change. I am just returned from her Majesty, who is, Heaven be praised! in perfect health, notwithstanding the danger she has run of catching the measles from the young princess, whom she never quitted during

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her illness. A more tender mother than this Queen never was born in this world.

As the sole alleviation which, during long months of harassing anxiety regarding her own fate and that of others (for it was not till late in April that the trials terminated), the royal captive of Cronenbourg enjoyed, was derived from maternal tenderness towards the infant sharer of her imprisonment, we gladly beguile the dreary interval, by giving, from a living high Danish authority, the following pleasing account of the nursling, to whom a mother thus circumstanced must have clung with tenfold affection, and to her cares for whom her now valueless life had nearly fallen a premature sacrifice;* glad thus perhaps to have been spared the parting agony which, when torn asunder by relentless man, left in the parent's breast a pang not to be stilled but by the leaden hand of death.

"Respecting the little Princess Louisa Augusta, who at the age of nine months was torn from the arms of her unhappy mother on her departure from Cronenbourg, she was brought back to Copenhagen, and educated with her brother, our late king. The most tender affection united these orphans, and when, as Crown Prince, at the age of seventeen, he took his place in the *Statsröd*, dissolved it, and by that means procured us the long desired counter-revolution, and became sole regent of the kingdom, his sister took the place by his side. She was enthusiastically beloved by the Danish nation, she was both beautiful and amiable, and we appeared to honour the memory of Carolina Matilda, by transferring the love we had borne her to her beloved daughter.

"She remained at court some years after her marriage

* By taking from her the measles during their joint incarceration.

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with the Duke of Augustenbourg. After that period she lived in entire seclusion in her family circle, and only died two years ago. She had three children, of whom the youngest is our present beloved Queen, who is an ornament to the throne, and adorned with every womanly virtue. She inherits the beauty and amiability of her grandmother, but, happily, not her misfortunes."*

If the negociator, as we have seen, pined for emancipation from a scene which, under different auspices, would probably have presented to him a widely differing aspect, the longings for release of the captive Queen are thus described by a contemporary writer.

"Ever since she had received the joyful tidings of her unexpected deliverance, she walked most part of the day on the ramparts of the castle, in order to descry the British pendant. She was at dinner when the reciprocal salute of the English frigate and the castle guns informed her Majesty of Captain MacBride's arrival. This gallant officer met on shore Sir Robert Keith, who, after a mutual exchange of compliments, introduced the Captain to her Majesty, by whom he was most graciously received, as the man destined to convey her safe to her royal brother's electoral dominions; far from the reach of the poisonous shafts of her enemies, and that land which had been the dismal scene of her unparalleled misfortunes and humiliations. When the Captain had notified his commission, and said that he should await her Majesty's time and pleasure, she exclaimed, in the anguish of her heart, 'Ah, my dear children!' and immediately retired. It was not for an insensible monarch, nor for a throne, on which she seemed to

* It will afford a pleasing proof of the power of time in soothing political feeling, and healing the most envenomed wounds of party, that the monarch whose throne the granddaughter of Carolina Matilda so worthily shared, was himself the grandson of her rival, Juliana Maria.

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have been seated, merely to be the butt of envy, malice, and perfidy, that her Majesty grieved; the excruciating idea of being parted from her dear children, and the uncertainty of their fate, summoned up all the feelings of a tender mother. She begged to see her son before both were torn for ever from her bosom; but all her Majesty's entreaties proved unsuccessful. Juliana envied her the comfort of the most wretched—that of a parent sympathising in mutual grief and fondness with children, snatched from her embrace by unnatural authority."

"A deputation of noblemen having been appointed," says the same writer, "by the Queen Dowager to observe the Queen, after her enlargement till her departure, under a fallacious show of respect for the royal personage, so lately injured and degraded,—when they were admitted to her presence, and wished her, in his Majesty's name, a happy voyage, she answered, 'The time will come when the King will know that he has been deceived and betrayed; calumny may impose for a time on weak and credulous minds, but truth always prevails in the end. All my care and anxiety are now for the royal infants, my children."

The following more detailed narrative of her emotions in parting with her infant daughter (her darling boy she was not permitted to embrace) are quite in unison with what Sir R. M. Keith has recorded of this "tenderest of mothers:"—"On the 27th of May two English frigates and a cutter having arrived at Elsinore, the 30th was fixed for the Queen's leaving Denmark. The last moments which this amiable woman spent in the Danish dominions were distressing in the highest degree. She was now under the necessity of parting from her only comfort, one of the two sole objects of her affection, her infant child, and leaving her in the hands of

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her sworn enemies. She fondly pressed for some minutes the babe to her bosom, and bedewed it with a shower of tears; she then attempted to tear herself away; but the voice, the smiles, the endearing motions of her infant,* were claims that irresistibly drew her back. At last, she called up all her resolution, took her once more in her arms, with the impetuous ardour of distracted love, imprinted on the lips of the babe the farewell kiss, and returning it to the attendant, exclaimed, 'Away, away, I now possess nothing here!'

"Everything being prepared for her Majesty's accommodation on board Captain Macbride's frigate, all her Danish attendants seemed overwhelmed with grief when their kind mistress expressed her satisfaction with their services, and took leave of such as were not to be permitted to attend her. None but Sir Robert Keith, and Captain Macbride, accompanied her Majesty on board the vessel; and when she was ready to sail, the guns of that fortress in which she had been immured were fired, as the last honour paid to the most unfortunate Queen that ever sat on the Danish throne."

It is added by Archdeacon Coxe, as well as by many other authorities, that "she remained upon deck, her eyes immoveably fixed on the castle of Cronenbourg, which contained the child that had been so long her only comfort, until darkness intercepted the view. The vessel having made but little way during the night, at day-break she observed, with fond satisfaction, that the palace was still visible; and could not be prevailed upon to enter the cabin, as long as she could discover the faintest glimpse of the battlements."

The following poem was found, (written as if copied

* Now at the interesting age of nine months, and but recently recovered from a dangerous illness, during which her fond parent never quitted her.

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in haste, in the hand-writing of an imperfectly educated person,) carefully preserved among the papers of Sir R. M. Keith. No other clue to its *possible* authenticity can be given.

WRITTEN AT SEA, BY THE QUEEN OF DENMARK,

DURING HER PASSAGE TO STADE, 1772.

At length, from sceptred care, and deadly state,
From galling censure, and ill-omened hate,
From the vain grandeur where I lately shone,
From Cronsbourg's prison, and from Denmark's throne,
I go!
Here, fatal greatness! thy delusion ends!
A humbler lot the closing scene attends.
Denmark, farewell! a long, a last adieu;
Thy lessening prospect now recedes from view!
No lingering look an ill-starred crown deplores;
Well pleased I quit thy sanguinary shores.
Thy shores, where, victims doom'd, to state and me,
Fell hapless Brandt, and murdered Struensee!
Thy shores—where, ah! in adverse hour I came,
To me the grave of happiness and fame!—
Alas! how different then my vessel lay;
What crowds of flatterers hastened to obey!
What numbers flew to hail the rising sun;
How few now bend to that whose course is run!
By fate deprived of fortune's fleeting train,
Now "all the oblig'd desert, and all the vain;"
But conscious worth, that censure can control,
Shall 'gainst the charges arm my steady soul,—
Shall teach the guiltless mind alike to bear
The smiles of pleasure, or the frowns of care.
Denmark, farewell! for thee no sighs depart;
But love maternal rends my bleeding heart.
Oh! Cronsbourg's tower, where my poor infant lies,
Why, why, so soon recede you from my eyes?
Yet stay, ah me! not hope nor pray'r avails;
For ever exil'd hence—Matilda sails.
Keith! form'd to smooth the path affliction treads,
And dry the tear that friendless sorrow sheds;
Oh! generous Keith! protect their helpless state,
And save my infants from impending fate!

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Far, far from deadly pomp each thought remove,
And, as to me, their guardian angel prove!
Yes, Julia! *now* superior force prevails,
And all my boasted resolution fails!

"Having passed the summer months in one of the electoral palaces, till the castle of Zell was ready for her Majesty's reception, she was conducted to this princely residence through an immense crowd of spectators, who wished this royal guest might long remain among them."

As, in the introduction to a recent work of fiction,* presented to the public under the auspices of a popular English author, a doubt (which the preceding *official* documents would have been alone sufficient to remove) has been cast on the fraternal interest of George III., in the misfortunes and subsequent fate of his unfortunate sister, it is with peculiar pleasure that the following letters, corroborative of his deep and continued attention to her comfort and welfare, are inserted here.

[*Private.*]

LORD SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Castle Rising, October 11th, 1772.

MY DEAR KEITH,

Though recollection does not suggest to me anything material, added to the variously extensive considerations we have discussed together, it does the real satisfaction I have had in discussing them with you; and how earnestly I wish success to everything public and private which concerns you. *You cannot be too minute and ample on all points of your mission to Zell.* A thousand little circumstances, which would, of

* The novel (translated from a Danish original, already alluded to) entitled the "Queen of Denmark."

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course, be passed over on other occasions, will be interesting upon this. And I think I may venture to assure you that the more conformable your accounts are to this hint, the *better they will please*. And I hope you will permit me to remind you of the respectful manner in which I begged to be represented to her Danish Majesty.

In the character of your friend, I may be permitted to write that which ministerial pride is not supposed to admit of. Therefore let me seize this opportunity of claiming your indulgence for all the crudities, inaccuracies, and errors which want of experience, or more irremediable qualities, may expose my public correspondence to. I know it goes into candid hands. But I wish instruction, as well as indulgence, and shall think myself infinitely indebted to you for a frank communication of all your ideas upon public points.

And now Sir, once more, may all success, honour, and happiness attend you! Let our connection continue most intimate and cordial, till such time as we shall be able to do something as useful to our country, as we have already been fortunate enough to do *agreeable to our master*; and as much longer than that period (if we ever are so lucky as to reach it) as you please. Nor do you ever cease to believe me, with the highest esteem and regard, your most obedient and most faithful servant,

SUFFOLK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD SUFFOLK.

Zell, November 2nd, 1772.

MY LORD,

I arrived here on the 31st October, late in the evening, and next day had the honour of delivering the King's letter to her Danish Majesty, whom I found in

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perfect health, and without any remains of pain from her late accident. In two very long audiences which her Majesty was pleased to grant me, I endeavoured to execute, with the utmost punctuality, his Majesty's command, and shall now lay before your lordship all the lights those audiences afforded me, relative to the Queen's wishes and intentions. I cannot enter upon that subject, without previously assuring your lordship that the Queen received those repeated proofs of his Majesty's *fraternal affection and friendship* which my orders contained, with the warmest expressions of gratitude and sensibility, and that nothing could be more frank and explicit than her answers to a great number of questions, which she permitted me to ask upon any subject that arose.

In regard to Denmark, the Queen declares that, in the present situation of that court, she has not a wish for any correspondence or connection there, beyond what immediately concerns the welfare and education of her children. That she never has written a single letter to Denmark since she left it, or received one from thence. That the only person belonging to that kingdom from whom she hears, lives in Holstein, and is not connected with the court.

The Queen having expressed great anxiety with respect to the false impressions which may be instilled into the minds of her children, particularly regarding herself, I thought it my duty to say that such impressions, however cruelly intended, could not, at the tender age of her Majesty's children, nor for some years to come, take so deep a root as not to be entirely effaced by more candid instructors, and the dictates of filial duty, when reason and reflection shall break in upon their minds. The Queen seemed willing to lay hold on that hope, yet could not help bursting into tears, when

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she mentioned the danger of losing the affections of her children.*

Her Majesty appears very desirous to communicate directly to her royal brother, all her views and wishes in the most confidential manner; hoping to obtain in return his Majesty's advice and directions, which she intends implicitly to follow. She said, that in matters of so private and domestic a nature, it would give her much greater pleasure to learn his Majesty's intentions upon every point, *from his own pen*, than through the channel of any of his electoral servants.

It gave me great satisfaction to find her Majesty in very good spirits, and so much pleased with the palace at Zell,† the apartments of which are very spacious, and handsomely furnished. She *wishes to have an apartment fitted up in the palace for her sister, the Princess of Brunswick*, as she thinks that the etiquette of this country does not permit that princess, in her visits to Zell, to be lodged *out of the palace*, without great impropriety. Her Majesty said, that she intended to write herself to the King on this head.

The Queen told me that the very enterprising, and dangerous part, which Queen Juliana has acted in Denmark, had created greater astonishment in Brunswick (where the abilities and character of that princess are known), than, perhaps, in any other city of Europe.

Her Majesty talked to me of several late incidents at the Court of Denmark, but without appearing to take much concern in them. She mentioned, with a smile, some of the paltry things which had been sent as part of her baggage from Denmark, adding, that this new

* An apprehension happily never realised. Her memory was affectionately cherished throughout life, by both.

† On first approaching it, and seeing the preparations made for her royal accommodation, she exclaimed, "Thank God! my brother still considers and treats me as a Queen!"

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instance of their meanness had not surprised her.* But the Princess of Brunswick, who happened to be present when the baggage was opened, expressed her indignation at that treatment in such strong terms, that she (the Queen) could not help taking notice of it in her letters to the King.

She let me understand that a small collection of English books would be very agreeable to her; leaving the choice of them entirely to the King.

Her Majesty more than once expressed how much she considered herself obliged to the King's ministers, for the zeal they had shown in the whole of the late unhappy transactions relating to Denmark and to herself. She is particularly sensible of the great share your lordship had in all those affairs; and has commanded me to convey to your lordship her acknowledgments for that constant attention to her honour and interests, which she is persuaded the King will look upon as an additional mark of your lordship's dutiful attachment to his royal person and family.

It only remains that I should beg your forgiveness for the great length to which I have swelled this letter. The only excuse I can offer arises from my ardent desire to execute the King's orders with the utmost possible precision.

I am, &c. &c.

R. M. KEITH.

* As a proof of the lofty and magnanimous disdain which (on the contrary) had influenced the British Princess to decline retaining the trappings of her Danish slavery, we quote a dispatch on the subject (the last addressed to Sir R. M. Keith):—

"His Majesty does not see any objection to his sister's receiving the jewels you mention, which were formerly given, and are now intended to be delivered to her. Her Danish Majesty will thereby only retain a *property*, not accept a present; and there seems no occasion for rejecting the attention voluntarily offered. But if the Queen of Denmark is *very averse* to the proposition, his Majesty does not wish to *control her inclination*."

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Before entering on the pleasing details of the brief interval of serene repose, if not unmixed happiness, which was, for two short years, the portion of the exiled Queen, it may gratify the interest which it is hoped her chivalric champion has awakened in the reader's mind, to close with the following extract, for the present, his familiar correspondence with his family:—

London, 1772.

DEAR ANNE,

There are situations which beggar all definition, and luckily stand in need of none. Such is mine at present, and I need not tell you from what a variety of concurring circumstances, I claim a title to be looked upon as the happiest man in this wide capital. My ambition is more than satisfied, my heart is completely so. The beneficent master I serve, has gone beyond my utmost wishes; yet, of all the obligations he has laid upon my mind, the manner in which they are conferred is undoubtedly the greatest.* I have acquitted myself hitherto with zeal and assiduity; Heaven grant that I may serve him one day with a success adequate to the measure of my gratitude.

You know already how much I am indebted to Lord Suffolk; his reception of me (a perfect stranger) was that of an old and intimate friend, and I have sworn to him and to myself, that in every event he shall find me act up to that honourable title. You have heard of

* This probably alludes to the peculiarly gracious reception of the writer by his Royal Master, the particulars of which have just been communicated to the editor by a surviving friend of Sir R. M. Keith. The obeisance customary on such occasions was prevented by the Sovereign who, saying, "No, no, Keith, it is not thus we receive our friends"—condescendingly substituted a cordial embrace for the usual kissing of hands. The circumstance, gratifying in itself, corroborates the extent and warmth of the Monarch's fraternal interest in his sister's rescue.

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my future destination,* which is the most distinguished upon all accounts, and the most *agreeable in every particular to myself.* I have obtained leave to make a journey, (a short one, I am afraid), to the Hermitage, where I long to rest me a little among my family and friends. *My poor nurse* must be told of my happy arrival. Inquire into her situation, and let me know when and how I can mend it. I am delighted with the joyful meetings which await me. But adieu, for I must fly twenty miles to dinner . . . .

I have little to add to this scrawl. I meet with fresh instances of goodness and friendship every day of my life; and if I had it not in me to be sincerely grateful, I should deserve the pillory! Once more adieu. Kind love to the Hermits and their many friends, whom I hope ere long to embrace.

Having thus consigned to domestic happiness in possession, and future honourable employment in prospect, the hero (the writer fears it must be confessed) of the preceding pages, it is high time to apologise, or at least account for, the prominence given in them to his character and correspondence.

That the fond hope of thus raising to a distinguished relative, a monument slight and perishable, no doubt, yet grateful to the best feelings of human nature, formed the paramount inducement, it would be vain to deny. But with the same truth it may be added that the hope of benefiting, by thus lifting aside the veil, which for nearly a century has shrouded these familiar effusions, the rising generation of statesmen and politicians, of proving that even in diplomacy the straight path leads most directly to success and fortune—that honour and

* The embassy to *Vienna*, where the memory of his father's long sojourn was affectionately cherished.

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integrity are weapons with which a high-minded soldier could sever its most intricate Gordian knots—that worthy sovereigns may be served from disinterested affection, and discerning ones rewarded by the devotedness of those in whom they place their confidence, has led (after many misgivings arising from their "strictly-confidential" tenor) to the publicity now given to the letters of Sir Robert Murray Keith.

After the dethronement of Carolina Matilda, and the death of Struensee, it required all the talent of Juliana and her party to keep the wheels of Government in motion. The finances were in the utmost disorder, trade at a stand, and Norway in such a state of popular ferment on account of an obnoxious poll-tax, as threatened a general revolt, while the sovereignty was in reality possessed and exercised by the Queen Dowager. Taking warning by the fate of Struensee, she suffered the council of state to be re-established, which, with the exception of her ancient foe and reluctant ally, Count Rantzau, was composed of persons devoted to her views. The King soon found his condition was not bettered; he had only changed keepers; and was deprived of some gratifications (perhaps properly enough) which he had enjoyed under the reign of his consort. What the court had gained in morality it lost in elegance and attraction; the graceful ease and magnificence of Versailles suddenly disappeared, and German etiquette, stiff, formal, and unbending, arose in its stead. If, however, Juliana restored the semi-barbarism of ancient German grandeur, she occasioned a greatly beneficial reduction of expense in the royal establishment. Had her ambition been bounded by this and similar reforms, and satiated by a resumption of power and influence as complete as it was unexpected, this princess (whose tact if not her ability, was proved by

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a judicious subsequent choice of ministers) might have lived down calumny, and stifled, by a wise and temperate use of renewed dominion, the relenting feelings of sympathy soon manifested by the nation towards her unhappy victim.

Her first step, on the contrary, was one calculated to corroborate and confirm all the rumoured designs of family aggrandisement ascribed to her from the birth of her own son; for whose appointment as Regent during the minority of his nephew, the infant Crown-prince, she secured a majority of votes in the council. As, however, without the concurrence of Count Rantzau she durst not risk the undertaking, he is said (on the authority of the MS. before quoted) to have been invited, with circumstances of great form and courtesy, to a secret conference in the palace, now inhabited by Queen Juliana,—whence he had so cruelly and treacherously ejected his former friend and royal benefactress,—for the purpose of sounding him on the meditated appointment.

The account of the transaction, for the accuracy of which the translator of the MS. pledges himself, is quite in keeping with the well-known vacillation and inconsistency of that unprincipled statesman, who, foiled in his hopes of rising to supreme power on the ruins of the friend whom he had, at the eleventh hour, fruitlessly endeavoured to warn, and twice out-manœuvred by the woman, whose tool he now perceived he was about once more to become,—sacrificed ambition to revenge; and by denouncing, as "more treasonable against the King than all the crimes imputed to Struensee" the projected nomination, frustrated for the moment the plan of Juliana, and anticipated by a voluntary self-banishment the order for exile which his contumacy had called forth.*

* A letter from Copenhagen mentions that the greater part of those persons who were chiefly assisting in the revolution of the 17th January

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Notwithstanding the efforts of the narrator (with whom the Count is evidently a favourite) to invest with an air of chivalrous loyalty this resistance to the domination he had assisted its possessor in usurping, it is impossible not to rejoice in the frustration of his own ambitious hopes; not to feel (as an honest skipper, grateful for the benefits of Carolina Matilda, is said to have done) satisfaction in seeing the fugitive wind-bound, within view of the blackening relics of his betrayed former associates; nay, not even to do more than acquiesce in the poetic justice which caused the too well-known arrester of Carolina Matilda to perish, spite of her alleged forgiveness, by the hand of an officer devoted to her memory.

The incident regarding the rencontre with the old seaman is so honourable to the well-known benevolence and affability of the Queen, and so completely in keeping with what is elsewhere recorded of her, as well as in itself bearing the stamp of truth, that we cannot resist giving it at length, on the authority of the Danish MS. already so often quoted.

When Count Rantzau, having freighted a small vessel for the purpose, was taking his final leave of Denmark, he had food for "meditation even to madness" in the fate of those former associates and benefactors whom, without benefit to himself, or permanent good to the state, he had precipitated from power. The sight of Cronenburg castle recalled the remembrance of Carolina Matilda and her sufferings, reflected as they

last, instead of being rewarded for that important event, are either disgraced or forced to resign their employments. The first Minister of State, and General, Count Schack de Rantzau Aschberg, is removed from all his posts, but with a pension of 8000 dollars. He is to depart for his estate at Aschberg with the first packet-boat. Several more changes in the ministry have followed; likewise in the military and admiralty.—*Weekly Magazine.*

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now were in his own virtual banishment. But a tack made by the skipper having brought the vessel nearer to Copenhagen, and in full view of the mangled remains of Struensee and Brandt, the Count, whose features denoted horror and surprise, sternly bade the skipper put instantly about, and on the man's humbly stating that to proceed on their voyage he must first weather a point of land called the Ness, the Count, ashamed of his weakness, flung him a ducat, and went below.

The skipper, by birth a Norwegian and a countryman of the Count's valet, showed him the ducat, saying, "What made your master start at the sight of the limbs of those men and order me to put about?" The valet, shaking his head and making no reply, the skipper continued, "Had *he* any hand in bringing them to that dreadful end? If he had, the Lord have mercy upon him; I would not have their blood on my head, for all the ducats in the world."

The valet looked the old man steadfastly in the face, and said, "Are you not Peter Neilsen, who rescued the King from the sea when he was Crown-prince." "Ay," said the blunt old sailor, "that man am I. The villain Brockdorff, I believe, (God forgive me if I wrong him), intended he should be drowned.* King Frederick, of blessed memory, gave me a handful of

* During the life of King Frederick the Fifth water-parties in the royal yacht often took place. During one of these the young Prince (afterwards Christian VII.) was more than usually wild and disorderly; neither entreaties nor remonstrances could prevail on him to be quiet. A gentleman of the household, Brockdorff by name, whose manners were not the most polished, threatened to throw him into the water unless he behaved more decently, and taking him by the arm, he was really awkward or unfortunate enough to let him fall into the water. The young Prince was rescued by a sailor, but ever afterwards it was impossible to persuade him it was not the act of his stepmother, who injudiciously confirmed his suspicions by taking Brockdorff into her service.

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money at the time, and ordered I should be provided for; but I never had any provision till the good young queen chanced to hear that I had once saved her husband's life. Heaven bless her! and be her guide and protector!" continued the grateful seaman. "She sent for me, and made me tell her all about it, which I did in my homely way. The beautiful Queen shook her head, as much as to say, I know who was at the bottom of this; and so did I, though I didn't say so. So then she bade her woman tell me I should be provided for when the King came home, who was then in England; and she shook me by my coarse hand, and made her baby put its little hand in mine to thank me for having saved its father's life; and she gave me money, for I was very poor, through sickness and ill luck.

"Soon after the King returned, I was indeed sent for to the palace, and the King himself took me by the hand; but it seems his Majesty thought I had been provided for. Count Struensee was there; but he was no count then; happy for him if he never had been! He was then the King's German doctor. I could speak a little German, and he told me I was to have a hundred dollars a year for my life, so that I need never work, or go to sea again. I fell on my knees to thank the King and Queen, and told them I should die if I were not to work, nor to go to sea. They smiled when they heard this, and the King said, 'Old man, thou shalt not die if I can save thee;' so then, Doctor Struensee (God bless his soul! and may his sins be forgiven him,) said, 'A gift of a small vessel would be more useful.' 'True,' said the Queen, 'he shall have a vessel, and the pension too,' and this very yacht was the Queen's gift. Now, have not I and mine, a right to pray for my benefactress?"

On learning the name of the enemy to her peace and

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fame, for whom his vessel had been freighted, the story goes on to say, that he not only pitched into the sea the ducat he had just received from him, but when paid his freight, set it aside for the poor, determined not to mix it with what he called his *honest* money.

The above anecdote derives additional authenticity, (whether, as circumstances and the *age* of the hero of the one just narrated render unlikely, they relate to the same individual, or another grateful recipient of Carolina Matilda's bounty), from an almost similar trait of disinterested attachment to the memory of a deceased benefactress, equally honourable with the above to the national character of Danish seamen, given in the "Tour of the Lady of Rank," already alluded to, as having occurred in 1796.

"On leaving Copenhagen," (after the audiences already mentioned, in which the venerable appearance and singular deportment of the King have been described), the tourist proceeds—"for Stockholm, I was accompanied by the two Dutch envoys, who were going to compliment the young King of Sweden on his marriage with the Princess of Baden; having myself been furnished with letters of introduction to the Princess Sophia Albertina, aunt to the King, from her Royal Highness the Duchess of York, who had been co-abbess of Gutemberg with her highness.* On our arrival at Elsinore, we hired two boats, one for the conveyance of our carriages, servants and luggage; the other for ourselves.

"We had scarcely set sail for Helsingborg, on the opposite coast of the Sound, the usual landing-place in Sweden, when one of the sailors, hearing us converse in the English language, thus addressed us with

* These particulars are merely given here, as lending authenticity and weight to the succeeding anecdote.

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all the frankness of his profession:—'There,' said he, pointing to the castle of Cronenburg, which was distinctly seen as we cleared the port, is the fortress in which the unfortunate and persecuted Queen Matilda was shut up by that infernal old beldame Juliana Maria, who I hope is now in a place where all the water in the world will not quench the fire which surrounds her! Poor Queen Matilda, God rest her soul! she educated three of my sons and one of my daughters, for whom she had the condescension to become godmother, and who died of grief when her benefactress was exiled.* I have since that time,' continued the old man, 'entered the Swedish service, determined never to set foot in a land which I detest; since it has been so cruel and unjust towards the poor departed Queen, who was condemned on the false evidence of individuals under the horrors of the rack, because they were persuaded that if they criminated her Majesty their own lives would be saved. Poor Brandt and Struensee, they little thought that while compelled to accuse their generous Queen, they were only sealing their own destruction! I never think of those dreadful times with a dry eye; though it is now near thirty years since that horrid transaction disgraced the national character in us Danes.' And indeed there was no hypocrisy," adds the narrator, "in the old seaman's expressions, for tears actually ran down his furrowed cheeks while he thus artlessly gave vent to his feelings. On reaching Helsingborg, we made a point of inquiring relative to the old man's story, and

* That it was not in isolated cases like the above that the characteristic benevolence of the unfortunate deposed Queen was manifested, is evident from a casual notice in the periodicals of the day to the following effect: "Several charities which were instituted at Copenhagen at the instance of the late Queen Consort have, since her departure, been abolished; and the utmost disrespect is shown at Court to everything that seems calculated to support her memory."—*Weekly Magazine.*

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found that there was every reason to believe in its veracity; as the officers of the customs were perfectly acquainted with the circumstances which led to his entering the service of Sweden, and spoke highly of his character. They added, 'that though frequently at Elsinore, he was never known to land, but always remained in his boat, firmly resolved not to break through his resolution.' On taking our leave of this honest son of Neptune, to whom each of the party gave some token of remembrance, we could not help contrasting his fidelity and gratitude with the conduct of those who have much greater reason to exercise those virtues; or asking each other how many of those who revel in the sunshine of royal favour would evince such sincere and heartfelt sympathy for fallen majesty."

That such or similar sentiments, however, soon resumed the ascendant in public opinion, may be gathered from the following paragraph, in a weekly journal of the time:—

"Private letters from Copenhagen say that every day witnesses fresh troubles in the state, that the many changes in the ministry cause murmurs and complaints all over the kingdom, and that the cruelties which have been exercised on some of the first nobility, by order of the Queen Dowager and her party, make her unpopular with all ranks of people."

"Denmark," says Adolphus in his history of the Reign of George the Third, "exhibited at this time a miserable spectacle of a frail government, and an imbecile sovereign. Since the banishment of Carolina Matilda, the King, too feeble in his intellects to act in any affair of state, relinquished the royal supremacy to the Queen-mother, an ambitious and designing woman, whose projects are said to have embraced the dethronement of her step-son, the exclusion of his children,

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and the usurpation of his younger brother. Under her, the weak and disjointed condition of the Danish ministry rendered it contemptible in the eyes of all Europe."

A later traveller in Denmark gives, on the authority of eye-witnesses of that period of nominal sway by the puppet monarch, an anecdote, elsewhere recorded, and quite in keeping with what French memoir-writers style the sayings (when at that court) of the "foolish yet *witty* King of Denmark;" and with the occasional gleams of acuteness which flashed across the darkness of his later years.

"During the early part of Juliana's domination, and when the reins of power were yet nominally in the hands of the King, she would, for form's sake, sometimes send the public documents for his sign manual. On one of these occasions, his signature was given as follows: 'Christian the Seventh, by the Grace of God, King of Denmark, &c., in company with Juliana Maria and others, by the *grace of the Devil!*' And as no remonstrances would induce the obstinate monarch to substitute the usual form, it may be believed that his signature was henceforward dispensed with."

We the more readily return to the legitimate and ostensible subject of our memoir, the exiled Queen, that we can do so, for a time at least, with unmingled satisfaction. "This exalted sufferer," says, and truly, her anonymous biographer, "was never greater than during the latter years which she spent in her retirement. She was no longer a young unguarded princess, whose levities had given her enemies too favourable an opportunity to effect her fall. She had learned in the school of adversity, and from the malevolence of Juliana, who had misconstrued even her virtues into vices, to act with such prudence and circumspection, as to command

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a personal respect independent of majesty; without being less admired for her gracious condescension, and most endearing affability. She appeared at Zell in her true and native character, divested of the retinue and pomp which, on the throne of Denmark, veiled her, in a great degree, from the inspection of impartial judges. She displayed, in her little court, all the princely and social qualities calculated to charm her visitors and attendants; there was in her person such grace and dignity as could not fail to gain her universal love. Though she excelled in all the exercises befitting her sex, birth, and station, and danced the first minuet in the Danish court, she never indulged herself in this polite amusement, of which she had been excessively fond, since the masked ball, the conclusion of which had been so fatal and disgraceful to her Majesty. As one of her pretended crimes had been the delight she took in riding, and the uncommon address and spirit with which she managed the horse, she renounced also this innocent diversion, for fear of giving the least occasion to the blame and censures of the malicious or ignorant.

"Her Majesty had an exquisite taste for music, and devoted much of her time to the harpsichord, accompanied by the melodious voice of a lady of her court. There was in her dress a noble simplicity, which exhibited more taste than magnificence. As her mind had been cultivated, by reading the works of the most eminent writers among the moderns, she read regularly two hours before dinner, with Miss Schulemberg, whatever her Majesty thought most conducive to her instruction or entertainment, in poets and historians; communicating to each other their observations, with equal freedom and ingenuity. She improved the knowledge she had acquired of the German language, and

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had a catalogue of the best authors of that nation, to enable her to converse fluently on subjects of literature with men of taste and condition. As her manners were the most polished, grateful, and endearing, her Court became the resort of persons of both sexes, celebrated for their love of the fine arts. The contracted state of her finances could not restrain that princely magnificence, and liberal disposition, which made her purse ever open to indigent merit, and distressed virtue. Naturally cheerful, and happy in the consciousness of her innocence, adored and revered by the circle of a Court, free from cabals and intrigues, even the dark cloud of adversity could not alter the sweetness and serenity of her temper. There she was surrounded with faithful servants, who attended her not from sordid motives of ambition, but from attachment and unfeigned regard. They were not the spies and emissaries of an artful, imperious, and revengeful woman; or the evil counsellors of a wretched King, the first slave of his debauched and profligate Court. Peace, content, and harmony, dwelt under her Majesty's auspices, whose household was like a well-regulated family, superintended by a mistress who made her happiness consist in doing good to all those who implored her compassion and beneficence.

"Banished with every circumstance of indignity from the throne of Denmark, her noble soul retained no sentiment of revenge or resentment against the wicked authors of her fall, or against the Danish people. Ambition, a passion incompatible with enjoyment, never disturbed her peace of mind: she looked back to the diadem which had been torn from her brow with a calmness and magnanimity, which Christina of Sweden could never attain after her abdication. It was not the crown she regretted, her children only

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employed all her care and solicitude: the feelings of the Queen were absorbed in those of the mother."

The genuineness of the letter subjoined by the biographer so often quoted, purporting to be from the Queen at this period (August, 1772), to her sister, the Hereditary Princess of Brunswick, there can now be no means of ascertaining. It is merely given here as containing not only a natural expression of the maternal feelings so often alluded to, but a pleasing, and perfectly correct description of the manner in which the calumniated Carolina Matilda employed her retirement from the cares, as well as pleasures (so called) of royalty, in which, only six short months before, she had been so fatally immersed, and which must now, when contemplated from this calm retreat, have appeared to her like some troubled and feverish dream.

Zell, August 27th, 1772.

DEAR SISTER,

Thanks to Heaven for having made me sensible of the futility and delusion of all worldly pomp and stately nothingness. Believe me when I tell you I have not once wished to be again an enthroned Queen. Were my dear children restored to me I should think, if there is on this earth perfect happiness, I might enjoy it in a private station with them; but the Supreme Disposer of all events has decreed that my peace of mind should be continually disturbed by what I feel on this cruel and unnatural separation. You are a tender mother, and I appeal to your own fondness. Pray give my love to the dear Augusta and all her brothers; now that she is in her seventh year, she is, I dare say, an agreeable chatty companion. As for Charles, he is, I understand, like his father, born a warrior;* nothing

* A prediction verified in the military career of the well-known Duke of Brunswick.

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but drums, swords, and horses, can please his martial inclinations. George, Augustus, and William, no doubt equally contribute to your comfort and amusement. Tell them I have some little presents I shall send them the first opportunity.

You desire to know how I vary my occupations and amusements in this residence. I get up between seven and eight; take a walk in the garden, if weather permits, give my instructions to the gardener for the day, observe his men at work with that contented mind which is a continual feast, return to the castle for breakfast, dress myself from ten to eleven, appear in my little circle at twelve, retire to my apartment about one, read, or take an airing till dinner, walk again in the gardens for about an hour with the ladies of my retinue, drink tea, play upon the harpsichord, sometimes a little party at quadrille before supper, and am commonly in bed by twelve. Every Monday I receive petitions from real objects of compassion, and delight in relieving their necessities according to my power; go twice to chapel every Sunday: and thus every week passes in a regular rotation of rational conversations,—*lectures amusantes et instructives*,—musical entertainments, walks, and little curious needleworks. I see every body happy around me, and they vie with each other in proofs of zeal and affection for my person. Now I can truly say I cultivate friendship and philosophy, strangers to the throne. I expect to see you soon, according to your promise; this visit will add much to the comfort of your most affectionate sister,

CAROLINA MATILDA.

The woman who, at twenty-one, could thus write, or what is of more importance, thus act, and that for the whole remainder of a too brief existence, when released

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from the trammels of etiquette, and left to follow the bent of her own inclinations, must, if ever she manifested qualities so foreign as those ascribed to her during one unhappy period, have been under the influence of a spell, which had only to be removed to restore her to her better and original self.

That a revulsion of public feeling in the favour of one so injured and amiable should ere long take place was only to be expected. "The cruel and unjust punishment," says her biographer, "inflicted on Carolina Matilda, for some indiscreet sallies of youth, was looked upon by the Danes with every allowance, for this amiable princess's endearing virtues and accomplishments filled the mind of the sensible and generous part of the nation with horror and indignation.* The King soon perceived his injustice and his error, a wretched solitary being, a prey to remorse for his conduct towards his injured consort,† whom he wished to recall, and to have once more seated on his gloomy throne; but his fickleness and imbecility made him again the sport of his step-mother's devices. Since this revolution, the state has gradually sunk into a languid inaction, torn by intestine factions, and exposed to the insult and derision of a powerful ally, become its enemy."

The hint contained in the foregoing passage, though penned in perfect unconsciousness of an event, of which

* The last letters from Copenhagen advise that the inhabitants of that city inveigh exceedingly against the execution of the Counts Struensee and Brandt; several circumstances having since appeared relative to the motives for the proceeding, which render the authors of it more and more odious to the public.—*Weekly Magazine.*

† This state of mind and feeling in the unhappy monarch is thus briefly but expressively noticed in the public prints of the day: "Advices from Copenhagen mention that the King has of late manifested an extraordinary absence of mind; and is almost continually in a state of despondency."

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all Europe was ignorant till its posthumous revelation by the chief actor concerned, as to the wish entertained in Denmark, ere many years had elapsed, to recall to the throne from which she had been so cruelly precipitated, the subject of this memoir, may serve to pave the way for the singular details given by Sir Nathaniel Wraxall of the negotiations to that effect, in which he became an agent; and which were only frustrated by the sudden removal from this world of their object. And inaccurate as this writer confessedly shows himself, on some occasions, in adopting and circulating reports for which he was indebted to others, it were surely unwarrantable to suppose (even did the narrative itself less bear the stamp of truth) that, in his record of a transaction in which he was personally engaged, and which was not destined to transpire till the grave had closed over the narrator, any conceivable motive should lead him to bequeath to future generations a relation of circumstances, whose easy refutation (if untrue) by persons still alive, would brand with falsehood the memory of their recorder.*

This deeply interesting history, as exciting in its details as any chapter in romance, occurs in his Posthumous Memoirs, vol. i. p. 372, to which the reader must be referred for particulars, of which our necessarily brief *resumé* must deprive him. It is thus introduced by one whose heart and soul had evidently been in the enterprise, in the prosecution of which, he underwent hardships and disguises little inferior to those of the *preux chevaliers* of old.

* They derive great additional credibility from the residence, already alluded to, of the writer at Vienna, and his intimacy while there with Sir R. M. Keith; with whom (it is evident from frequent though *guarded* allusions in Sir N. Wraxall's letters) the matter had been talked over; and to whom the latter (who entertained for him the profoundest

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"I am tempted to recount an adventure in which I was personally engaged, the nature and delicacy of which has hitherto prevented my divulging it to the world, but which I may, without impropriety, transmit to posterity. If the tragical transactions connected with Maria Antoinette must ever agitate the human mind, the history which I am to relate respects a princess, whose misfortunes and premature end, warmly interested her contemporaries, and will be perused with emotion in future times. I mean the Queen of Denmark, Carolina Matilda, consort of Christian VII., and sister of George III."

A lively personal interest in this princess having been excited in his mind by a visit to Zell (in which he had the satisfaction of communicating to her oral information respecting her beloved children, whom he had recently seen at Copenhagen), Sir Nathaniel, then a young disengaged traveller, and, as may be gathered from his writings, of a character quite fitted for political intrigue, was admirably disposed to become the agent of a party of exiled Danish nobles at Hamburg, whom the growing unpopularity of the faction which had supplanted them in Denmark, and assurance of support and success from that quarter, had led to form well-grounded plans for the restoration to power and dignity of the now again popular banished Queen.

To insure this success, two, and two only, concomitants were deemed indispensable—the consent of Carolina Matilda herself to embark in the no doubt somewhat hazardous enterprise, and her influence with her brother of England, to procure for it, *when achieved*, such assurance of support as should offer those engaged

veneration) would not have ventured to make any but an authentic communication, especially on this particular subject.

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in it a guarantee against the consequences of possible *reaction*. Pecuniary aid from George III. was also a necessary condition towards its accomplishment.

The prosecution of these objects involved their willing negotiator in a series of travels by flood and field, in the midst of an inundated country, in the depth of a northern winter, to which he says all his other extensive *Tours* (so fully and graphically recorded) were as nothing. Nor is any drama, even of the Spanish school, more fertile in midnight assignations, on lonely ramparts and in solitary post-houses, nay, in the palace of royalty itself, than the romance of real life, which we thus reluctantly abridge. The most really perilous, however, of these interviews, to the success of the enterprise, was one in broad daylight, when, previous to one of the early dinners of the little German courts, it was Sir Nathaniel's somewhat nervous task to deliver in public to the Queen (in presence of her sister the Duchess of Brunswick, a witness justly dreaded by the party, as niece by marriage to the Queen Dowager of Denmark, Juliana Maria), the letter containing the proposal for that now triumphant princess's dethronement from virtual sovereignty, and the substitution in her place of the reader of the unlooked-for missive.

The heightened colour, irrepressible curiosity, and somewhat indiscreet evidences of natural emotion, betrayed by the still young and high-spirited princess (in spite of the earnest warnings conveyed in its envelope) on perusing, thus circumstanced, a document, purporting to relate to a company of *comedians*, but in reality putting a throne once more within her grasp, —are such as cannot be read without corresponding and breathless interest; or without an immediate and irresistible conviction, how easily one, incapable of dissembling, even when taught by sad experience and

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misfortune, must have become a prey, in her days of reckless prosperity, to the malignant, and probably ill-founded constructions, of the enemies she unhappily despised.

Recovering, however, the royal dignity she could so well, even in adversity, assume, Carolina Matilda, in various secret interviews with the negotiator, entered on the discussion of his delicate mission with an ability, as well as propriety, which seems to have surprised, while it charmed the envoy; whom she furnished with credentials to her faithful partisans, and assurance of her readiness, at the suggestion of duty as well as inclination and maternal affection, to co-operate with the Danish nobility (at whatever personal hazard to herself), provided the consent of her brother of England —as a hospitably entertained resident in whose states, she purposely declined all attempt to quit them without his sanction—should be obtained. This she, on being made acquainted in a second interview, with their precise wishes, and stipulations, undertook to procure.

Not content with writing to her brother to enforce the appeal to his fraternal feelings, on the part of the exiled noblesse, she also wrote (anticipating that the caution of George III. would preclude his granting Sir Nathaniel a personal interview) to Lord Suffolk, who, as Secretary of State at the time of her misfortunes, and as the friend of Sir R. Keith, she justly regarded as one deeply interested in their termination; and to Baron Lichtenstein, a personal favourite of her brother's, and enjoying as such, *un*-official opportunities of discussing the subject with his Majesty, and communicating the result to Sir Nathaniel,—who, with these credentials, made a hurried and fatiguing journey to London, where he arrived 15th November, 1774.

The former nobleman being, as usual, *hors de combat*

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with a fit of the gout, the business was transacted through the latter; who very cordially undertook it, and proceeded, after many tantalising delays, occasioned by the necessity of correspondence with the Queen's party, to ascertain the precise nature of their views and stipulations,—to deliver to Sir Nathaniel on the 3rd of the following February, a paper drawn up in French, containing *four articles*, expressive of the King's approbation and consent to his sister's restoration, on the following conditions:—That no act of severity, beyond simple dismission, and removal to their private places of abode, should, in the event of success, be exercised against any of the individuals actually in possession of power. That as soon as the revolution was effected, the King's minister at Copenhagen should be directed to declare that it had been done with his co-operation. By the third, though he declined making pecuniary advances for facilitating the enterprise, he guaranteed the repayment of such sums as should necessarily be expended in procuring the return of Queen Carolina Matilda to Denmark. By the fourth, he engaged that when the revolution should be completed, he would maintain it, if requisite, by the forces of Great Britain.

Furnished with this all-important document, Wraxall set out for Zell and Hamburgh, and braved (as a less enterprising man might have felt impelled to do) the perils from impassable roads and swollen streams, to which we have already alluded, and of which no one who has not seen a northern country under water in the winter time, can form an adequate idea. He seems to have found the reward of his chivalry, in the graciousness of the reception of its object in a two hours' interview on the following afternoon, of which he has left a detail too animated, and relevant to the subject of these pages, to be omitted.

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"It took place," says he, "in a spacious apartment, the windows of which commanded a view over the gardens of the castle; and I had scarcely leisure to cast my eyes around, when the Queen entered, without any attendant. My interview with her lasted till near a quarter past six, during all which time we stood in the embrasure of a window. As I had then an opportunity of closely examining her countenance and person, it being *broad daylight*, I shall add a few words more on the subject, though I have elsewhere described her. Her charms consisted principally in her youth, the delicacy of her complexion, and her *embonpoint*. Like the King, her brother, she betrayed a hurry in her articulation when eager and agitated; but which peculiarity rather added too than diminished her attractions. Her manners were very ingratiating, noble, yet calculated to win those who approached her. Indeed, towards me, who was engaged at the hazard of my life, in endeavours to replace her on the throne, it was natural she should express much good-will and condescension. I say to place her on the *throne*, because it was not merely the crown matrimonial to which she would have been restored; Christian VII. being in a state of hopeless imbecility, it followed that if she returned to Denmark, she must have been invested with supreme authority, as Regent, during her son's minority.

"After expressing regrets that her brother had not admitted me to a personal interview, and hopes that the stipulations I had brought from England would satisfy the party engaged in her interests, with *great animation* she assured me, that no sentiment of revenge or animosity towards the Queen Dowager, or Prince Frederick, or any of the individuals who had arrested or imprisoned her, would ever actuate her

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conduct.* The mention of their names naturally led her to speak of the memorable night of the 16th January, 1772, when she fell a victim to her imprudence and want of precaution. I would have avoided such a topic for obvious reasons, but she entered on it with so much determination, that I could only listen while she recounted to me all the extraordinary occurrences which befel her; not omitting names and particulars respecting herself and others of the most private nature. I am, however, far from meaning that she made any disclosure unbecoming a woman of honour and delicacy." †

The not unnatural dissatisfaction of the Altona refugees, with that one stipulation from England, which made the King's declaration by his Minister subsequent to, instead of simultaneous with, the counter-revolution, necessitated a mission to Copenhagen, which the officious Wraxall was, from prudential motives, with difficulty withheld from volunteering. The stipulation again of the powerful party there, for the Queen's personal presence (which this true sister of George the Third's never flinched from hazarding) at the *outset* of their enterprise, in hopes of inducing the King of

* These amiable sentiments seem hereditarily and unconsciously (for they were not published till long after 1784, and her children, at her decease, were too young to have imbibed them) to have influenced her son in his triumphant, yet Christian, assumption of power in that year.

† The narrator might have spared the last proviso, one rather in his own peculiar style. But, independently of this negative testimony (which, as posthumous is undoubtedly valuable) the instinct of womanhood impresses on every woman,—like Matilda, of "honour and delicacy,"—that nothing short of the triple shield of innocence could enable one of her sex to press, in broad day-light, with a somewhat youthful countryman, subjects, involving (on any other supposition) her dereliction of woman's holiest duties. Nor, had the consciousness of guilt been to accompany her back to Denmark, would she have been so ready to place her head once more within the jaws of a fate, which, conscience must then have whispered, would not be revenge, but retribution.

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England similarly to countenance its execution at the *moment*,—necessitated fresh journies to Zell and London, in which Wraxall was once more a willing and unobjectionable emissary. His last interview with the Queen, an evening one, prefaced with excessive precautions, and preceded by long and apprehensive waiting, in a miserably rainy and tempestuous night, is thus described.

"The room (the Queen's library) was fully lighted up, and in about half an hour she entered the apartment. She was elegantly dressed in crimson satin, and impressed me as having an air of majesty, mingled with condescension, altogether unlike an ordinary woman of condition. Our interview lasted two hours. She assured me she would write the letter demanded by the Danish nobility, to her brother, before she retired to rest; and 'as to the question put to me (added she), whether I should be ready to set out for Copenhagen,—assure them that I am disposed to share every hazard with my friends, and to quit this place upon the shortest notice. To obtain my brother's permission for that step (which I cannot take without his consent and approbation), shall form one of the principal objects of my letter to him.'"

These material points being settled, our conversation took a wider range, and as her Majesty showed no disposition to terminate it, we remained together till near eleven. When ready to leave me she opened the door, but retained it a minute in her hand, as if willing to protract her stay. She had never, perhaps, been more engaging than that night, in that attitude, and in that dress. Her countenance, animated with the prospect of her approaching emancipation from Zell (which was in fact only a refuge and an exile) and restoration to the throne of Denmark, was lighted up with smiles, and she appeared to be in high health.

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Yet if futurity could have been unveiled to us, we should have seen, behind the door which she held in her hand, the "fell anatomy" (as Constance calls him) already raising his dart to strike her. Within seven weeks from that day she yielded her last breath.

It was, not, however, amid the toils and hazards of revolution, or the recovered pains and pageantries of royalty, that the impending stroke was to descend upon the head of its unconscious victim. The absence (on Wraxall's arrival in London, on the 5th of April, 1775), of Baron Lichtenstein, in Hanover, and the necessity created, by the caution of the King, in refusing a personal interview, of transmitting all communications by that circuitous route,—protracted the business till May the 10th,* when the Baron wrote to Wraxall to await in London his next dispatch, assuring him that all was proceeding favourably for the projected enterprise.

On Friday, the 12th of May, all this fabric of hopes and expectations was dashed to the earth by the tidings of the decease of the ill-starred object! Carolina Matilda, for whose restoration, with or without the co-operation of her brother, the day and hour had actually then been fixed, had breathed her last, or at least was unconscious, ere a letter, containing, it is believed, his full assent to her every request, reached Zell, whence it was returned, with the seal unbroken, to the writer.

* The precise day of Carolina Matilda's demise. The event is thus announced by Lord Suffolk to Sir R. M. Keith, in terms identifying them both with its illustrious subject :—

"*London, May* 19, 1775.

"DEAR KEITH,

"News is just arrived of *our* Queen of Denmark's death. She died of a putrid fever and sore throat, on the 10th of this month.

Yours ever, most truly,

"SUFFOLK."

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Perhaps it was well for the peaceful serenity of a death-bed, on which no thought of earth seems to have intruded, that a document, so calculated to awaken visions of temporal greatness, was not permitted to reach the closing eyes of the dying sufferer; though the equanimity she manifested when a throne had seemed for ever lost, renders it doubtful if even its restored possession could at that moment have disputed with higher aspirations, the resigned and weary spirit of the royal victim!

Wraxall proceeds to relate what personally concerned himself, and his strenuous, though frustrated exertions, in the service of the Queen and her adherents. The latter were not ungrateful, and made urgent and persevering applications in his behalf, through Baron Lichtenstein to George the Third. They remained, however, apparently disregarded, till in 1781, six years after the death of Carolina Matilda, Lord North thus addressed him one day in the house: "Mr. Wraxall, I have received his Majesty's commands to see and talk with you. He informs me that you rendered very important services to the late Queen of Denmark, of which he related to me the particulars. He is desirous of acknowledging them, and we must have some conversation on the subject. Can you come to me at Bushy Park, dine, and spend the day?" At this interview, Lord North asked Sir Nathaniel what compensation he expected for his expenses in the service of her Majesty? A thousand guineas was named, and shortly after paid, and employment promised, but prevented by the change of ministry in 1782.*

* An unexpected collateral testimony to the one before mentioned—corroborating the truth of the transaction itself from the cognizance of it of Sir R. Murray Keith,—was given to the Editor (as regards the circumstance of this visit) by the lively surviving inheritrix of the Premier's

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We must now accompany the unhappy Princess, so long the sport of fortune's most cruel and harassing vicissitudes, to that closing scene, which their quick succession undoubtedly accelerated. When we consider that at an age when female youth is generally still sheltered beneath a parent's fostering wing, Carolina Matilda had to encounter a cruel and final separation from all she had ever known or loved; unkindness and contumely in a foreign land; calumny and misrepresentation, followed by adulation, rendered more perilous and intoxicating by previous neglect; that, hurried from a scene of unconscious revelry, she was awoke in the night by a rude soldiery, and conveyed to a fortress, where, for four long months, her own fate was more than doubtful, while that of others must have called forth agonising sympathy; that during this interval of forced separation from one child, the life of the other, her nursling, was in danger, and its recovery the signal for its being for ever torn from her arms; that in quitting Denmark, she not only bade farewell to power and royalty, but a final farewell to objects dearer far; and that, no sooner had torturing anxiety for them allowed her a brief interval of peace, than these were invaded by agitating proposals (accepted, no doubt, chiefly for her children's sake), to embark once more on the stormy ocean where her bark had already suffered shipwreck,—who can wonder that a mental and bodily constitution, which, at four-and-twenty had exhausted all the vicissitudes of a long life, should fall an easy prey to the inroads of malignant disease? Twice, indeed, within a few months, had she experienced

unrivalled social qualities—Lady Charlotte Lindsay; on whom (then a mere child) the after-dinner stories of her father's entertaining guest made an indelible impression.

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severe illness, which her youth alone had probably enabled her to withstand.

"Though her excellent sense, and the indignities she had suffered on the throne" (writes her biographer) "had reconciled her to a private station, yet her bodily frame had been visibly impaired by the repeated shocks of the outrages she had borne, with that noble fortitude, the result of innocence. The uncertainty of her dear children's fate, and the very thought of their being for ever precluded from her sight, daily preyed on her soul. No other retrospect gave her the least uneasiness. 'Were it not,' said her Majesty often to the ladies of her household, 'for this cruel separation, I should be content and happy; but this is more than I can bear.'"

Two or three months before her death she showed with transports of joy to Madame D'O——, her first lady of the bedchamber, a little portrait of the Prince Royal, her son, which she had just received. It happened that this lady, some few days after, entered the Queen's apartment at an unusual hour, and was surprised to hear her Majesty talking, though quite alone. While she stood, in the attitude of astonishment, unable to retire, the Queen turned suddenly round, and addressing her with that smile which she alone could preserve at such a moment, while her heart was torn with the most acute sensations—"What must you think," said she, "of a circumstance so extraordinary as that of overhearing me talk, though you find me perfectly alone? But it was to this dear and cherished image I addressed my conversation. And what do you imagine I said to it? Nearly the same verses which you applied, not long ago, to a child, sensible of the happiness of having found a father; verses," continued she, "which I changed, after the manner following:—

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"'Et qui donc, comme moi, gouterait la douceur,
De t'appeler mon fils, d'être chère à ton cœur!
Toi, qu'on arrache aux bras d'une mère sensible,
Qui ne pleure que toi, dans ce destin terrible?'"

Madame D'O—— could not speak; she burst into tears, and, overcome by her emotions, hastened from the royal presence.*

Though the circumstances connected with the Queen, in which we have seen Wraxall so deeply engaged, were not for many years subsequently made public to the world, they must have been full in the narrator's mind when he paid, at the distance of three years, a *fourth* visit to the now desolate scene of such high hopes and brilliant anticipations; the frustration of which must have deepened the contrast he so pathetically describes, and will lend a deeper interest to the details of her premature decease.

"This place," writes he in 1777, "is no longer to be recognised for the same city it was three years ago. Now all is silent and desert. Not a carriage is to be

* May it not be hoped (judging from the date of this touching anecdote) that it was in the view of a possible reunion with her son, that this tenderest of mothers so feelingly apostrophised his likeness? That the Queen obtained the portraits of her children, is matter of history. The Danish MS. so often before quoted, gives a somewhat romantic, yet natural, account of the mode in which they reached the bereaved mother, by the hands of an actress, who had accompanied the now *repentant* Rantzau in his exile. To this person, whose sentiments and manners were superior to her unhappy condition, her former royal patroness is said to have exclaimed, while thanking her for the precious images of her lost children, "I am now a veteran in sorrow, though so young in years. Fate has crowded into the last ten months of my life more misery than, if spun out, might have embittered a *century*." While the affecting remark of one, who had only gazed at her afar off in the days of splendour, was, "How greatly is the Queen changed! Her sufferings have, indeed, not been lost upon her! The *sedate and melancholy cast* of countenance she has acquired, only renders her beauty more striking! Her appearance is much *improved* by it."

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seen or heard in the street; grass already grows in the area of the castle, and hardly a human creature is to be found within its walls. I wandered yesterday for a considerable time through the galleries and apartments, without being able to meet any person, till, casting my eyes into one of the rooms, I discovered at its farthest extremity a man, whom I soon recognised to be Mantel, the late Queen's valet-de-chambre.* He conducted me all over the Castle, which is a noble edifice, fit for the residence of a sovereign prince. It is a square Gothic fortress, having ramparts and bastions for its defence, and surrounded by a moat. The apartments inhabited by the late Queen of Denmark (in which all had been left exactly as at the time of her death) may be termed magnificent; but in a few years they will probably sink into neglect and dilapidation."

For the somewhat diffuse, though authentic and simply-touching details given by Mantel to Sir Nathaniel of his mistress's last fatal illness, we must substitute the more concise, though equally affecting one contained in the following letter, from a lady of her household, written to an influential person at the Court of Copenhagen.

Zell, May 15th, 1775.

"The epidemic with which we were threatened, no longer exists here; having carried off in the chateau only a page, besides our beloved Queen, so deservedly the object of not only our own but the most general regrets. Her Court, where she was idolised, is overwhelmed with grief, notwithstanding their firm persuasion that our worthy Sovereign † will take care of them. But it is for *herself* she is so deplored; and you

* The same who, under very different circumstances, had been his conductor, under cloud of night, to that palace, of which they two *now* had the unlimited and unquestioned range!

† George III. of England.

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cannot imagine the distress and consternation which spread through the whole town when she was understood to be in danger. She was indeed so, from the first moment of her seizure, in the opinion of our clever physician, Leyser; and was herself at once aware of it, saying to him, in express terms, 'You have brought me, since October, through two pretty serious illnesses, but this one will baffle you;' and she spoke but too truly!* The fever showed its violence from the beginning, by a pulse of 130, and for the two last days it was past counting. Leyser sent for Zimmermann, from Hanover, who came to his aid, but without effect.

"The eruption did come out, but it was with spots, which indicated its violent nature; and to this cruel disease, and the decrees of an immortal Providence, we owe our unspeakable loss. After having suffered like a Christian, with the most perfect, nay almost unexampled patience and resignation, testifying, as usual, the most gracious and tender attentions towards the ladies who nursed her through her illness, and retaining her senses and speech to the last moment, she terminated her career in a manner which edified and penetrated with admiration all who witnessed it. She saw both our worthy superintendent Jacobi, and the pastor Lehzen, who never left her; and to whom she pointed out several times what he should read to her; and among other things, that beautiful hymn of Gellert, on *The Love of Enemies*, 'Never will I seek to do them

* "The Queen," said Mantel, "who was of a plethoric habit, had always been constitutionally subject to inflammation of the throat. The weather was excessively warm, and on the 4th of May, having risen early, as was her custom, and walked out for a couple of hours, exposed to the sun, she returned exceedingly fatigued, continued unwell all day, and, on going to bed at night, said to the faithful narrator, 'Mantel, I am very ill, and fully believe that I shall die!'"

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harm,' &c., frequently repeating the last verse. In a word, during these closing hours, when the mask falls from every human being, the truly heroic firmness with which she seemed to sustain the painful reverses of such signal misfortunes—the magnanimity (of all human virtues perhaps the most difficult to practise) which she displayed towards the adversaries who never ceased persecuting her—joined to the irreproachable conduct which has marked the whole time we have had the happiness to possess her, have thoroughly persuaded us of the malignity of the enemies of this august Princess. She however, has forgiven them, and we must try to do the same, hoping they may confess and repent the wrong. At the funeral service in the great church, the whole city was dissolved in tears; and in the streets, while she yet lived, nothing was heard but lamentations and invocations for the restoration to health of '*unser guten und lieben Königin.*' "*

"On the first symptoms," writes another contemporary, "of the malignant fever which snatched her from a censorious and merciless world in the prime of her youth, Carolina Matilda declared, with calmness and resignation, to her attendants, that she did not expect to survive the malady; and before it grew worse, she wrote two letters with her own hand, one to his Britannic Majesty, and the other to the King of Denmark. After they were sealed, she said, with tears in her eyes, 'I hope the King, my brother, will protect my friendless children; and that the King of Denmark will do my memory that justice he denied me while living. I freely forgive my persecutors and enemies, and will die in peace with all mankind, and my conscience.' Her Majesty continued to the last in these pious and edifying

* Our good and beloved Queen.

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sentiments; comforting herself all those who beheld, with mingled grief and admiration, their royal mistress in the agonies of death. She preserved her senses to within a few minutes of that awful moment, except in the delirious intervals of her illness. She expired on the fifth day of her violent disorder, which baffled all the skill of her physicians, on the 10th of May, 1775, about midnight, before she had accomplished her 24th year, universally lamented by all ranks of people in her native country, who had sympathized with her disasters, vindicated her innocence, and foiled her accusers.*

"The inhabitants of Zell, who experienced her beneficence, grieved deeply for her loss. The King of Denmark, though conscious of the flagrant injustice he had done to his consort, was not allowed to mourn publicly for this royal victim of malice, vengeance, and calumny;† but the Danes will revere the ashes of their ill-fated Queen. The imprudences of her youth are already forgotten, but her virtues and sufferings will be transmitted to the latest posterity."

That this was no fond anticipation of warm (though anonymous) partisanship, belied by the subsequent result—the following elegant expression of the general sentiment in Denmark, from the pen of one of the living ornaments of its now widely differing Court, affords a pleasing proof.

* The participation of the English public, the middle and lower orders especially, in the sorrows and wrongs of their native princess, can hardly be overrated. It displayed itself at the time of her rescue in eulogiums (in almost all the then existing periodical publications) on Sir R. Murray Keith, under the title of the "Heroic Minister."

† So outrageously was decorum violated on this occasion, that when the intelligence of the decease of the mother of the royal children arrived, the royal family appeared the same day at the theatre, and there was afterwards a ball in domino. The king (evidently constrained) was among the dancers; but so much affected as to alarm the foreign ministers who had occasion to approach him.

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"Although seventy years have elapsed since the revolution in Denmark, of January 1772, it still lives in the memory of every Dane; as it laid such a violent hand on the rudder of the State, and has not perhaps been without its influence on our political history; and even after the lapse of seventy years more, the unfortunate, but amiable Carolina Matilda, and her mournful destiny, will still be remembered."

The interest created, it is hoped, in the reader's mind in behalf of this worse than orphan offspring of an unhappy mother, as well as the love of poetical justice inherent in all mankind, will render acceptable the following brief account of the counter-revolution of 1784.

In January 1784, the Crown Prince completed his sixteenth year. In stature he was very like his father. His complexion very fair, his eyebrows bushy for a youth of his age; his hair almost white. Though a plain likeness, he bore a strong resemblance to his unfortunate mother.

The Queen Dowager, if (as is inferred) she did not cherish hopes of excluding the heir-apparent from the throne, had succeeded in keeping him hitherto as much as possible in the back-ground; and filling the residence with unfavourable reports; even insinuating that he was affected with the same mental imbecility which had so long incapacitated his father from governing. Restrained, it is said, by the advice of the wary Goldberg* from attempting to set aside his succession, she

* Goldberg, the preceptor to Prince Frederick, was the then efficient minister for foreign affairs. After the fall of Struensee, an *interior cabinet* was erected, nearly of the same kind as that for which he was doomed to die. Having possession of the king's person (who continued in a deplorable state of mental imbecility) the Queen Dowager exercised the most despotic power, till the son of Matilda wrested the reins of government from her hands, and drove her into a retirement from which she emerged no more.

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yet used every method to protract the period of taking his seat in the Council, as he must necessarily do on his confirmation; a ceremony which, at the age of fourteen, had been gone through by his father, Christian the Seventh, and which, at a later period by two years, it was no longer in her power to delay.

On the 28th of March 1784, being then sixteen years and two months old, the Crown Prince was confirmed, in the royal chapel of Christianborg, in the presence of the whole court, the foreign ministers, the great officers of State, and other persons of distinction. Monsieur Bashkow, first chaplain to the King, interrogated him as to his religious creed. The examination was a long one, and the young Prince made his responses in a firm, manly, deliberate, and very audible tone of voice. His demeanour was mild, dignified, and collected; giving the most complete refutation to the calumnies that had been so industriously spread. The Queen Dowager was astonished and dismayed. The impression made on the audience was such, that many were actually affected to the shedding of tears. When Count Bernstorff * was assured of the firmness and capacity which the Crown Prince displayed on this trying ordeal, he anticipated complete success when the great attempt should be made.

* Count Andreas Bernstorff (nephew to the able minister formerly mentioned) the secret adviser of the young prince; who, in his correspondence with him, is said to have displayed premature discretion, and a firm sensible mind. Their intercourse had not escaped the lynx-eyed Juliana, and was communicated by her to Goldberg, who told her he believed that a crisis was at hand which would be fatal to her power; and admonished her not to risk the consequences which might ensue to herself and her son by pushing matters to extremities. The warning (as in the case of those whom she had herself overturned) was unheeded; but the less vindictive spirit of those who triumphed averted the consequences.

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At length the hour arrived which was destined finally to destroy the power of Juliana and her party, and effect a change almost as great in the Danish government as that which followed the arrest of Carolina Matilda. Having received the sacrament, the Crown Prince was admitted as a member of the Privy Council, and succeeded his uncle, Prince Frederick, as president. On the morning of the 14th of April, he took the oath prescribed. At the moment of relieving guard, when a double proportion of the garrison was under arms, he gave personal orders that no one should quit his post without permission from himself. The Council was assembled in the King's apartment, his uncle was present. The Crown Prince addressed himself to his father, stating that the law now called on him to govern; to do which efficiently, he required a council in which both he and the nation had confidence. He then produced a memoir which he had composed, and which having read, with a firm deliberate tone of voice, he laid before the King, and requested his signature. The poor imbecile monarch, who had during so many years been kept in total subjection, appeared to hesitate.

One of the members, Rosencrone, arose and said, "Your Royal Highness is sensible that the King cannot sign such a paper, without due consideration." He had the boldness even to attempt to snatch the paper from the Prince's hands. Turning round to the Count with an air full of dignity and courage, he said, "It is not for you, sir, to advise the King on such an occasion; but I, who am heir to the throne, and responsible as such to the nation." Goldberg was silent, appearing thereby to acquiesce. Prince Frederick looked astonished and dismayed. The Crown Prince then laid the papers before the King, by whom they were immediately signed. Being thus authorised to act, the

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Prince addressed himself to the Council, and in a mild, yet decisive tone, announced their dismissal.

Fearless and alone, attended only by a single domestic, the young prince perambulated the town, without the interference of the military; the crowd keeping at a respectful distance. The windows and balconies were filled with handsome and well-dressed females, who waved their handkerchiefs, bowing as he passed. These courtesies he gracefully returned, and thus escorted by a people in whose affections he already reigned (and whose respect and confidence, amid subsequent national misfortunes, he never lost) the Crown Prince, on this most brilliant day of his life, returned to the portals of Christianborg.

Amid the extensive changes that ensued, in every department of the state, the removals were attended, even in the case of the most obnoxious individuals,* with exemplary moderation, nay, considerate kindness.

Infinitely to the credit of the Crown Prince, he set an example to all the servants of the crown, in the respectful delicacy with which he treated his dejected, disconsolate, step-grandmother. He strove, by the kindest deportment, to soften the stroke which had wrested a sceptre from her hands; and his mildness and humanity affected her proud spirit more than any other mode of conduct could have done. She saw that he pitied and forgave her, and it almost broke her heart. She soon withdrew from the metropolis, fixing her residence at Fredensborg. Sullenly resigned, she strove to

* Even General Eichstadt (a chief agent in the misfortunes of his unhappy and beloved mother, and who, by a refinement of cruelty, had been appointed his own *governor*), was allowed to retire to his estates with honour and emolument; and M. Goldberg, (the Struensee of the late régime, but a man of widely differing character, and of exemplary private virtues) was permitted to retain his high situations in the household of Prince Frederick, with a pension of a thousand a year!

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appear not to value what she had for ever lost; and aware of the unpopularity which, sooner or later, accompanies the votaries of ambition and the abettors of crime, she remained henceforth entirely secluded from public affairs.*

To conclude, the mildness and fortitude that distinguished the Crown Prince, on this trying occasion, entitled him to admiration and esteem. There was a pensiveness imprinted on his features, that showed he had not been nursed in the lap of fortune. He sought to obtain his legal inheritance, but he avoided anything that looked like exultation or triumph. Firm and temperate at the moment of peril, his demeanour was marked by modesty and discretion. When his enemies were overthrown, humanity forbade him to expose to misery and degradation those whom he had dismissed from their offices; though the greatest fault of many of them was the part they had acted in the sad and terrible events of 1772. Obnoxious as they must have been on that account to a son, by whom the memory of his

* She emerged from her retreat (it would seem) on an occasion, which might have been thought to have recalled to her mind any but pleasing recollections, though it will afford to that of the reader an interesting reminiscence of the infant daughter of the unhappy Carolina Matilda. In 1785, Count Razomonffsky, Russian minister at Copenhagen, writes to Sir R. M. Keith :—

"La Reine demeure à Fredenbourg, et ne vient ici que rarement. On dit que ce séjour *l'ennuie;* et qu'elle fait tout ce qu'elle peut pour trouver les occasions d'en sortir. Elle se rendra ici le jour de *la confirmation* de la Princesse Royale; qui est aussi intéressante par sa figure, que par son affabilité, et ses manières honnêtes et prévenantes. Cette cérémonie se fera en public, et nous y assisterons. Quant à son mariage, le tems n'en est point fixé. Le Prince son frère qui *l'aime tendrement*, voit dans ce parti l'avantage de ne s'en point separer; et il a été engagé à y souscrire, par les raisons d'état, qu'au defaut d'hérédité de sa part, et de celle de son oncle, c'est à sa sœur que la couronne doît échoir." The union proved a most happy one; and its offspring, a daughter, by marrying the late King, united the rival races of Juliana Maria and Carolina Matilda.

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mother was through life idolized, he displayed towards them, at this early age, a spirit of clemency and moderation,* that gave the fairest prospect of the virtues which justly endeared him to all his subjects, as Frederick VI.

That Sir R. M. Keith retained a lively interest in the offspring of her whom his friend Marshal Conway always styles "*his* Queen," cannot be doubted. We have seen one Ambassador's reports to him of the sister. The following account of the brother, from Mr. Elliot, the British minister, is dated a year later:

"*Copenhagen, August*, 1786.

"The Prince Royal is much improved since I last saw him, and gains daily on the affections and good opinion of his subjects. The Danish army, which was much neglected, is *now fully adequate to check the ambition of a neighbouring country*. The Prince has the sole merit of having effected this, by unremitting assiduity, and a marked natural genius for military pursuits."

At a period when the ancient good feelings between Denmark and Great Britain appear reviving in their pristine force, it is impossible to conclude the above sketch without echoing the remarks of Wraxall (in his Posthumous Memoirs, written after the changes here recorded), on their far earlier possible renewal, and the widely different and more auspicious probable course of events, as regarded both kingdoms, had the counter-revolution he was employed in forwarding in behalf of Carolina Matilda, actually taken place.

That it would, had she lived, have been effected, "without difficulty, and almost without resistance," he says, "from the easy and bloodless manner in which it

* Precisely akin, be it remembered, to that which his lamented parent herself had expressed, on her expected restoration to power in 1775.

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was carried into execution by the same individuals, or their survivors, in the spring of 1784," as narrated above, "cannot admit of a doubt."

He then adds, with a posthumous, and therefore valuable testimony, to the "energy of character and firmness" of the youthful destined Queen-regent,—"that the restoration of Carolina Matilda must have produced most beneficial political consequences to Denmark, by reviving the ancient hereditary natural connexion between that country and England, is incontestable."

"Even the modern history of Denmark, including the events that took place during the late revolutionary war, and consequently the destiny of Europe, has been affected by the consequences that flowed from the imprisonment and exile of Carolina Matilda, followed by her premature death. For her brother, George the Third, imbibed so rooted a dislike to the Danish royal family and alliance, that he never would listen to any proposal for renewing the connexion by marriage with the house of Oldenburg. I know that the present king,* Frederick the Sixth, when prince-regent, made, between 1787 and 1789, repeated efforts to obtain the hand of an English princess, leaving the selection in a great degree to his Britannic Majesty; but the king instantly rejected the overture. The heir of the Danish monarchy thus refused, espoused, in July 1790, the eldest daughter of Prince George of Hesse Cassel, by whom he had no male issue. Contrary to the true policy of Denmark, we find him thenceforth joining with France at every period of his administration.

"Napoleon had not, among his vassal kings, a more determined ally, and that formidable chief, when in

* The late monarch, son to Carolina Matilda.

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1806, and the following years, he planned the invasion of this country, he relied, with good reason, on the navy of Frederick the Sixth, to 'transport,' as he threatened, 'the vengeance of the continent to our shores.' Hence, we may assume, took place the sanguinary naval engagement of Copenhagen in 1801. '*Hoc fonte derivata clades.*' Hence, too, originated the siege and surrender of Copenhagen in 1807. Hence, also, the loss of Norway in 1814; a kingdom which, during successive centuries, had been united to Denmark, but which is now transferred to the dominion of her ancient enemy, governed by one of Bonaparte's lieutenants, who occupies the throne of Gustavus Adolphus. Such are the extraordinary facts which we have witnessed in our time; facts indirectly to be traced to Carolina Matilda's death. Had she been restored to Denmark, and filled the situation of regent during her son's minority, we can scarcely suppose that her brother would have refused to cement the alliance between the two crowns, by giving one of his daughters in marriage to his nephew. Norway might, at this hour, have remained subject to him, and the Danish capital would never have been attacked or entered by an English army."

Such were, on the retrospect of nearly half a century, the conclusions of a political observer of acknowledged sagacity. May the generous interposition of our own day, banish from the minds of both nations the recollections of a less auspicious period!

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[Having now concluded the Memoir of Queen Carolina Matilda, in whose sad history Sir R. M. Keith took so deep an interest, the interval between his earliest and latest political transactions (the intermediate ones being already authentically detailed in "Coxe's History of Austria"), will, it is hoped, not unacceptably be filled by his familiar correspondence with distinguished individuals of his time.]

Among the many changes, palpable, striking, nay, gigantic as they are, which within the last century have totally altered the face of society in Britain, substituting general intercourse for local association, general wealth for individual accumulation, and views of general utility for private opinion, and the ties of political party—there has not been wanting an undercurrent of change, running silently and with more questionable effect within its bosom; bearing with it, into the wide ocean of universal philanthropy, or sometimes, it may be feared, into the more absorbing tide of selfishness, much of that tenacity of personal friendship by which, at an earlier and simpler period, even public men were wont to indemnify themselves for the restraints and conventionalities of office.

Of this love ("passing," like Jonathan's, "the love of woman") it was the good fortune, perhaps not wholly undeserved, of Sir Robert Keith to enjoy an unwonted portion. And as the feudal usages, predatory habits, and local traditions of "sixty years ago," are now probably (thanks to the author of Waverley) more familiar to the present generation of readers, than genuine

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out-pourings of affection and school-boy merriment from the Treasury bench and Foreign Office, a collection of letters, as "curiosities of literature," not likely to occur again in our matter-of-fact age, are here preserved; that those who have learned from history, how English public men acted and spoke, and fought, under North and Pitt, and Wolfe and Rodney, may, by a little peep under the domestic curtain (rendered harmless, alas! by the demise of all by whom it might have been deprecated), be made aware how their hearts could at the same time beat high for their country's honour, and dignity, and yet find in them a quiet corner for a tenderness of more than feminine friendship, which it was evidently the solace of their lives to pour forth, and which it never occurred to their manly hearts to be ashamed to express.

Far be it from us to assert that there are now no male friendships. But the annihilation of distances consequent on facilities of intercourse, leaves little scope for its expression on paper. Never again will a Horace Walpole carry on (as he somewhere boasts) a forty-three years' correspondence with a friend, whom, in all that time, it was never his lot to behold; or a British minister at Vienna, during an expatriation of twenty years, have his warm domestic feelings cherished, and his proud patriotism fed by the loving epistles of the very men who, while mingling in the stormy politics of the time, or even sitting at their uneasy helm, could give politics to the winds, to exchange "nonsense" with one who, while deeply immersed in what he somewhere calls the "slough of despond," yclept diplomacy, still contrived (thanks to his natural buoyancy of disposition) to keep up, in a brighter and purer atmosphere, his clear Briton's head and warm Briton's heart.

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The peculiarity—a peculiar charm some may think it—of the ensuing letters is, that while deficient comparatively in Walpole's passing incident and local gossip, they are rich in their exuberance of good feeling and good will to mankind. The heart has still more to do with them than the head, powerful as were the intellects which could thus sportively unbend. No one, perhaps, could rise from their perusal, without at least a keener appreciation of the pleasure of friendship, and a deeper conviction that there is a sunshine of the soul, which office could not obscure, nor ceremony chill, nor the very clouds of age itself suffice to dim; and why? because its perennial fount *within* was independent of external circumstances, and destined to survive even the body's decay.

Among the official friendships of Sir R. M. Keith (and they were many), one of the tenderest was that with the Earl of Suffolk, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. A private letter, formerly given, addressed by him to Sir Robert at Zell, would suffice to show that the admiration excited in his principal, by his conduct in the difficult Danish business, had been ripened by personal intercourse into warm and affectionate regard. That it was not impaired by absence, a correspondence continued, in spite of the disabling effects of the painful disorder to which Lord Suffolk fell an early martyr, till his death in 1778, exists to prove. In corroboration of the above remarks on its peculiar cordiality, a specimen or two may appropriately usher in the series. The Foreign Secretary thus unofficially accompanies the first dispatch for Vienna.

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[*Private.*]

THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Duke-street, Westminster, Dec. 1772.

DEAR KEITH,

An opportunity of addressing a few lines to you in my own hand, cannot happen without my making use of it while I have a hand to employ, which has not been the case long, from repeated attacks of the gout. I have enjoyed but a short interval of health since you left us, but I begin to know the value of that blessing, and shall, for the future, endeavour to deserve it. I never meet any of your friends who do not make the kindest inquiries after you, though I have seen none of the *gang* lately, Bagot excepted. Harley's time is taken up with the Select Committee, whose business it is to inquire into those affairs which every body *knows* the state of—I mean the condition of the East India Company. Our friend is chairman of this Committee, and I dare say will make a very accurate report of all he has discovered. And this will not only justify the interference of the legislature, but render a failure of interference highly culpable. So little of other business is passing in St. Stephens', that I can collect nothing from thence to make you stare or smile. Few sessions have sat three weeks without making one do one or other. Our senators are intent upon doing everything they can for the reduction of the price of the necessaries of life; I fear, after all, they will have the mortification to find their labours fruitless. We must not expect that our shoulders are strong enough to support such a load of debt without smarting under it. This must have its operation universally; and a person who buys the commodities he stands in need of, dearer in consequence of it, must of course sell those he has to dispose of dearer.

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I think you must confess I have not forgotten my promise, of sending you a letter of *chit-chat*. I have only to add, that as we miss you at Copenhagen, it is but fair you should give us the satisfaction of profiting by you at Vienna. Prevent, therefore, the ruin of many industrious traders, by procuring an efficacious support to the King's representations in favour of the city of Dantzick.

Si Pergama dextrâ defendi possent. Happy is it for that place that so much of its interests is lodged in your hands! Believe me, dear Keith,

With the truest regard and esteem,
Your most faithful and obedient servant,
SUFFOLK.

The following, though written some time after, yet, as referring to a purely personal matter, may (to preserve unbroken another series of correspondence, and as a proof of warm and undiminished friendship) be here introduced:—

If I were writing, my dear Keith, to one who I did not believe truly and affectionately interested himself in my welfare, I should not begin my letter by speaking of myself; and saying that I am now, thank God! perfectly recovered. I have been able to tell you so these ten days; but I wished to be able to tell you something more, and therefore deferred writing. It is with the sincerest satisfaction I can assure you that I have the fairest prospect of succeeding in your business.*

I found a favourable opportunity of resuming it, and I have, I think, convinced Lord North, that while he is forming arrangements to gratify others, it is not

* A well-founded claim for increase in official appointments, rendered absolutely necessary by their former inadequacy to the expenses incurred.

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unreasonable that he should acquiesce in the pittance I request for you, and that now is the moment to do it. Having cleared the way thus far, I pressed him strongly to give me an immediate assurance that the thing should be done; but as I could not bring him quite up to that point, my next object was, to try the dispositions of our most gracious master. I acquainted him with the state of my negociation with Lord North, adding, that I believed it stood so well, that a word from his Majesty would throw the balance the right way at once. I feel more deeply than I can express, the kindness and alacrity with which the King undertook to speak to Lord North. He repeatedly said he would do it with *pleasure;* and, with his usual precision, desired to know the amount of what was wished. I told his Majesty with equal frankness, the sum your friends desired for you. My opinion is that the prospect is fair. God bless you, my dear Keith, and give you all success!

Ever yours most affectionately,

SUFFOLK.

In a still later letter he thus writes, on a similar subject:—

The remainder of your business being in such good hands, I trust I may hope it will be speedily completed. There is hardly a *man in the world* for whom I would have endeavoured to carry this point, besides yourself; and I do not believe there are many for whom North would have done it. Nor do I in my conscience think it just to attribute our success entirely to his attention for me. I do believe his good-will towards yourself, and his consideration for your distinguished behaviour, turned the scale, and had its full and honourable weight.

I ever am, dear Keith,

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

SUFFOLK.

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SIR R. MURRAY KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.*

Harwich, October 18th, 1772.

HERE I am, my dear Brad, upon the utmost verge of the best of all possible kingdoms, with the expectation of quitting it in a few hours! I have a thousand tender feelings for those I leave, and as many anxious ones in regard to the business upon which I am now to enter. What zeal, assiduity, and truth can do to justify the partiality of my friends and patrons, shall not be wanting. You live among those to whom I owe everything. Bear witness to them of the extent of my gratitude, and be assured that I am, with the truest friendship,

My dear Bradshaw, yours for ever,

ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, December 5th, 1772.

I TOLD you at parting, my dear Brad, nay, more, I proved to you by geometrical demonstration, that I am,

* This gentleman (often playfully styled in the correspondence "my lord," from being a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty) formed one of the select society already mentioned under the title of the "Gang;" and enjoyed in consequence, along with the intimacy of its other distinguished members, that of Sir R. M. Keith; and seems to have been selected, for his congenial epistolary powers, as the amanuensis of that circle of friends, to cheer with home intelligence its exiled member. It was a task for which he was eminently fitted, by the confidential acquaintance with, and active participation in, their measures, ("far beyond," says Walpole, "his ostensible situation,") to which he was admitted by the Ministry; as well as by a vein of playful humour, too much akin to his correspondent's own, not to have formed a bond of mutual intimacy; resting, however, it will be seen, on higher and better grounds than mere political sagacity, or convivial pleasantry. The series of letters, (carefully preserved by surviving friends to *both*, and forming an unbroken whole), will, on that account, be more acceptable to the reader; and by their lively *badinage*, relieve the graver portions of the present work.

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and ought to be, the happiest of all mortal beings. That a separation from a set of the best friends that ever a poor man was blessed with, has thrown a cloud over that happiness, is nothing more than a proof that I am not undeserving of those sentiments, upon the duration of which, I have the most implicit reliance. I am firmly persuaded that my royal master, and his ministers, under whom I serve, as well as my private friends, *and their wives*, are the honestest people alive; I expect to be every day more and more obliged to every one of them; and hang me if I don't serve them all in their turns, to the very best of my power! So much for what you already know; now to the new scene upon which I am entering. After making a kind of a zig-zag journey through Holland, Germany, &c., (in which I picked up your two scraps, for they are no more, though folded in the shape of letters) I arrived here on the 20th November.

The first ten days of my residence here were trotted away in leaving bits of card at doors, and repeating my dancing-master's bows to crowds of people who may, in a course of years, become my friends, or at least acquaintance. I don't know how my own face looked upon these occasions, but I know that I felt pleased, as every person turned of forty said something kind about my father.* A good omen, you 'll say—for a favourable impression, conveyed from fathers and mothers, may possibly be transferred to the second generation, and work in my favour. I am a stranger, a perfect stranger as yet; but I may hope to be looked upon as a benevolent traveller, who brings good intentions, and hopes for good treatment. You shall know more of me

* No more detailed account of Sir R. M. Keith's *present* debût in Vienna having been (unfortunately) preserved, the reader is requested to refer for his probable reception as a *resident*, to the letter from Dresden, describing its flattering tenor when a mere passing visitor.

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when I have had time to look about me, and peep a little into the minds which animate the handsome faces I have seen. No offence to the dear creatures I have left behind, if I say that there are here some as pretty patterns of Dame Nature's workmanship as one can set eyes upon; and then they play at loo as keenly as any Bess in Europe! But what is that to me, who never touch a card, you know?

Well; but I must have done scribbling to you, for I am to write this very day to every point of the compass, to tell my colleagues that his Majesty's plenipo is legitimately installed in the enjoyment of so many thousands per annum.* Heaven grant me an opportunity of returning the beneficent bestowers of the thousands some good merchandise for their money!

I entreat of you, dear Brad, to remember our bargain, and to administer to me, now and then, an enlivening dose of that wholesome nonsense I delight in. You, and the *Gang*, deserve Tyburn together, if you suffer me to dwindle into a wise and humdrum politician! Adieu, my friend, carouse with the present, cherish the absent, make the fortune of Sir Basil, and believe me,

Most truly yours,

R. M. K.

* The replies to these circulars, still extant, are very characteristic. While one stiff *confrère*—(indeed, many do,) congratulates, not the Envoy, but Great Britain and the Royal Family, on the promotion of one to whom they are indebted for such well-known public services! another (in witty though irreverent phrase) thus expresses himself. "I most heartily wish you joy upon your nomination to Vienna. I hope you will not have *so hot work* there as in your *last place*; but should there be any, and it ends as much to your honour and reputation as that did, I do not care if all the devils in H— were to appear to you!"

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, December 11th, 1772.

DEAR ANNE,

Your patience has been meritorious, and shall be rewarded. You see my intentions by the size of my sheet, and I promise you it shall be crammed with all manner of novelties, great and small. First, then, I rejoice with you on the prospect of our being in possession of a capacious and most elegant building, to hold and preserve our deeds and titles.* The clan Keith will not require a large allotment of the inside of the office; but they have, in my opinion, as clear an interest in the outside, as any family in the kingdom.

Secondly, I think my father's advice to Abergeldie's son the wisest that can be given.† I am told that his purchase here, if permitted, must begin at the very lowest rank of an officer; and an order is soon expected, to forbid any future sale of commissions. This matter seems pretty clear; but I have one hint to give you *en passant*, which is, that whenever you mention a Scotch laird, you will, for the moment, sink the magnificence of title, and condescend to let me know his family name. Abergeldie, however pompous, may be, for aught I know, the name of a Roman cardinal; and I should have some scruple in serving as counsellor to one of their Catholic eminences. *Apropos* to cardinals, I dined yesterday at the house of one, who expresses the most sincere regard for my father, and desires it may be known to him; Prince and Princess Clary, ditto; as also Esterhazy, Colloredo, Lichtenstein, Lubomirski,

* The splendid new Register Office erecting at Edinburgh, under the direction of Sir R. M. Keith's particular friend, Lord Frederick Campbell, then Lord Registrar for Scotland.

† Mr. Gordon, of Abergeldie, so named, *more Scottice*, from his family estate.

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Kinsky, Auersberg, Dietrichstein, Khevenhuller, Schwartzenberg, Sternberg, Kollowrath, Taronca, Trauben, and Trautmansdorf, Hildburghhausen, and Burghausen, Tekeli, and Freychapell; in short, the whole city and suburbs of Vienna! You see that your friend Abergeldie walks at the head of a handsome procession, and need not be ashamed of his company.

And now pray, my dear Anne, let me appoint you my substitute with G——,* to din into his ears, "*Trees, trees, trees!*" every time you meet him. I have not a twig of his planting at the hall, and I own I expected a forest. This is no joking matter;† I would rather be master of a handsome plantation, and *hedge-rows*, than of a mine of gold; so you know your cue, and will pursue it. You shall be the ranger of the new forest in Tweeddale, and your husband, when you get one, shall be lord-warden of the marches!

There is a fatality attends the English post since my arrival here, which leaves me often in the dark as to what regards my private, and, I may say, invaluable

* Sir R. M. Keith's bailiff, on his property in Tweeddale.

† This alludes to an amusing anecdote (just communicated to the editor), occurring in a letter from Sir R. M. Keith to his sister, when travelling in France in 1764. "Yesterday afternoon, in passing through the noble forest of Compiègne, I took the liberty of questioning, as follows, my man Andrew, who is a gentleman of great sagacity. 'Pray, Andrew, saw you ever so fine a forest as the one we have come through?' 'Sir,' quoth Andrew, 'the forest is a gay forest; but I 'se warrant I 've seen other forests before now.' 'Where, Andrew? Have you anything like this in Athol?' 'Aye, sir. I wish your honour had only seen the Duke of Perth's grit forest in our country! It hae a hantle of fine deers in 't, and Colonel Græme pays a hunder pund starling by the year just for till keep the deers frae bein' destroyed intilt.' 'Well, Andrew, I 'm glad to hear what you say; but are the trees in that forest as fine as those we saw to-day?' '*Trees, sir!*' quoth Andrew; 'no, sir, there 's no a stannin' stick in the Duke's grit forest; but it 's a' bonny hill and heather, like the *wood o' Mar.*' O, patriotism, patriotism! thy errors are beautiful! I embraced my man Andrew, and we pursued our journey."

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connections. Few men, I believe, my dear Anne, can brag of such a set of friends as those I have left behind me; and no man can be more grateful for that first of all worldly blessings. From the kindness and good disposition of many worthy people I have met here, I will flatter myself that my good fortune, in that respect, is not confined to one nation or country. My old Saxon friends * received me, in my late visits, with great cordiality; and I am now so near a neighbour, that I can attend to all that passes among them.

A letter, like an egg, is all the better for being *new laid;* and I confess it hurts me to think that this beautiful sheet of nonsense may be musty and fusty in its *eighteen days'* passage from hence to Leith. However, this must not deter us from continuing our traffic; the more so, as I can assure you that your folio of the 5th November, came as fresh as the first day. *Basta cosi—m' intende?* You speak very good Italian, and I wish you could see our comic opera, and our ballets. The whole life and conduct of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and Ægisthus, and Orestes, with loves, jealousies, murders, and complete revenge, are expressed to a miracle in capers and *coupées;* and I declare to you, that this heroic tragedy, without words, is as interesting as a tragedy can be, when Garrick is not an actor. Our composer Noverre, is a very Shakespeare (no offence to his memory), and, as an author, he is certainly one of the greatest that ever put *toe to stage,* for I cannot say pen to paper.

You village maidens have no idea of these brilliant and pompous shows, and, to say the truth, that noble pile of building, the Taylors' Hall, is not large enough to be a waiting-room for Clytemnestra's maids of honour!

* The Court of Dresden, from whence Sir R. Keith had, in the Dowager Electress, a weekly correspondent.

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But enough of this; I must not put you out of conceit with the Leith company of comedians.

Lord Stormont left this place two days ago, loaded with all possible marks of esteem and distinction on the part of the Sovereigns, and affectionate regard on that of his numerous private friends. To a man of his sensibility, such a separation must needs be very painful.* The goodness of the Harrach family to me is even beyond my expectations; and my father will, I am sure, take pleasure in thanking them for it. Count Ernest had provided me a house in the Dorothée street (my father's first street), but it will not contain my family when they are all assembled. It is not easy to find a suitable house without a monstrous rent; but I have some months before me, and shall do my best to keep within bounds. Private affairs remind me of Sir Basil, and I hope soon to hear of the completion of his wishes, if my intelligence be well founded. I may have accounts from my brother in an hour or two, as the English post

* This is beautifully expressed in a letter, addressed to Sir R. Keith by his predecessor, previous to the former's arrival. It runs thus:—

"*Vienna, September*, 1772.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind letter, and for the many flattering marks it carries of the partiality of your friendship. The best return I can make for all your cordial wishes for my future happiness, is, to wish, as I most heartily do, that in point of private satisfaction you may gain as much by your change of situation, as I shall certainly *lose by mine*. I am fully sensible of the distinguished mark of favour his Majesty was pleased to show, in choosing me for an employment (the French Embassy) which is so much sought after; but, at the same time, I am too well acquainted with this country, and that I am going to, ever to expect anything that can compensate the loss of that society to which I must soon bid a *long farewell!* As to you, my dear Sir, you have already many cordial friends in this country, (some of them hereditary ones), and will soon make more; and, in all probability, when the day comes, you will leave Vienna with as *much regret as I do*. As to politics, after the repeated proofs of prudence and ability you have given, you must be very unjust to yourself not to feel, that you are *more* than equal to any business which can arise *here*."

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is expected; so I will suspend the conclusion of my scrawl till then.

Dec. 12*th.*

Basil confirms the good news of his blooming hopes; may they soon ripen into such substantial fruit as suits his palate and circumstances! * You talk of rains and inundations, while at present my daily walks round Vienna are as pleasant as at any time of the year. Whenever any object strikes me agreeably, I reflect

* A wish realised by Sir Basil's appointment to the government of Jamaica. As a specimen (courtly even for that day) of the ministerial language of the times, may be quoted the expressions of the Colonial Secretary to Mr. Keith, his father. A short time previous to the nomination, Lord Dartmouth (then newly entered on office) thus writes.

SIR,—I am very sorry that my predecessor had given Sir Basil Keith any hopes of being appointed to the government of one of his Majesty's Colonies in America; because, if it should hereafter be my good fortune to be able to fulfil his wishes in that respect, I shall not be able to claim to myself the sole merit of a recommendation, which will be so honourable to me, and so advantageous to the public. The personal character of Sir Basil, as well as the public and eminent services of his father and brother, entitled him to my particular consideration from those who are intrusted with any share in the administration of the King's affairs; and though I should ill-deserve the frankness with which you have honoured me with your commands, were I to say he will be the very *first* I may wish to recommend, I can say with equal frankness and sincerity, that it will make me very happy to see the day when I shall find myself at liberty so to do. I hope you will believe that I feel what I express, when I assure you that I am, with the highest sense of the pleasure I received from our former acquaintance, and with great regard and esteem,

Your most obedient and humble servant,

DARTMOUTH.

The courtly secretary was perhaps not yet aware that Sir Basil possessed a friend at court more powerful than either. On the authority of the same venerable surviving friend of Sir R. M. Keith, by whom other anecdotes have been communicated, George the Third, considering apparently the ribbon and embassy so handsomely conferred, as only the well-earned meed of diplomatic merits, still wished to add some token of personal good-will, and complaining repeatedly that while others continually importuned him, "Keith would ask nothing for himself," drew forth the fraternal wish of a provision for his less fortunate brother.

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with pleasure that it has probably created the same sensation in my father. My love and duty to him and all the Hermits. Adieu, dear Anne.

Your affectionate

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, Dec. 26th, 1772.

Your reasoning upon the subject is perfectly just, my dear Brad; and it would be the highest absurdity to expect that a Lord of the Admiralty, who has apartments in Hampton Court Palace, and a town house opposite to Lord Bute's, should waste his time in scribbling to a pragmatical fellow, whose dulness has been rewarded by the privilege of talking politics to a foreign potentate. I give up the point, my dear Sir; I release you from every engagement of that sort, and all I request is, that you will be pleased to allot one half guinea per quarter for the postage of those letters which I must address to you, in order to keep up the appearance of my being in a certain intimacy with some of your great men at the helm of affairs. As to the letters I write (as I am persuaded you have too much sense to read them yourself), the best thing you can do is to clap a cover upon them, and send them down to some blockhead at your borough of Saltash, telling him that they come from a foreign Minister, and probably contain a great part of the secrets of Europe. This epistle will, I am afraid, hardly serve for that purpose, but I shall take care that the next shall be a perfect plum-pudding of foreign hard names, surmises, innuendoes, crosses and stars, and your whole borough may feast upon it for a month. I allow that your antagonist, Mr. Williams, may set up a counter-correspondence in the borough, and tell them strange tales about the

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Caribs and the other savage inhabitants of the West Indies. But I trust to the political genius of your worthy constituents, and make no doubt that the hints I shall be able to convey from the banks of the Danube and the Pruth, and the Borysthenes, and the Black Sea, will greatly preponderate, and secure your interest in the corporation. In this manner I would fain hope that my correspondence (otherwise nugatory and jejune) may be turned to some little account, by that ability which your lordship possesses in matters of government.

With regard to my humble self, I must freely confess, that the total silence of all my friends did make me fret a little at first. But I am now perfectly reconciled to it, especially since I have fallen upon a method of obtaining authentic information (and *pretty fresh too*) of everything that passes in old England. For I have written to a gentleman in the city who will send me out by the first ship that *sails in the spring* for Trieste, a complete second-hand set of the Magazines, both *Universal and Country;* and I defy any one of you all to be married, or pilloried, or hanged, but what I shall know of it before six months go about.

Don't you blush, Mr. Bradshaw? Does not the cream colour of your countenance tinge itself with red at the repeated instances of my moderation and forbearance? Have you read thus far without feeling that with no more trouble, and at the expence of only three and sixpence, I could have *spoken daggers* to you in the first page of Mr. Woodfall's * lucubrations? Put me not, however, to further trial; the patience of man has its limits; and if this letter be not answered by return of post, I will buy out *Surena*,† seize upon *Poets' Corner*, and baste your worship with more lampoons and

* The well-known printer of the Letters of Junius, &c.

† A *nom de guerre* of one of the writers in Woodfall's paper.

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epigrams than ever poor Wolfe had epitaphs. But I trust to your repentance and amendment, and shall, for this once, return to our familiar chit-chat, as if nothing had occurred to interrupt it.

I don't know how it is, my dear friend, but the same old story which you and I talked over in a post-chaise, about a thousand pounds a year, *a wife and a farm*, is continually trilling through my brain; and I can't for the soul of me help thinking, that in something of that kind consists the *summum bonum*. But mounted as I am upon the above-mentioned hobby-horse, I can, however, assure you with great truth, that whilst I am to serve my master abroad, I never can have a commission so honourable and agreeable as the one I now enjoy. I like the sovereigns I am sent to, their capital, and their subjects. There is not a happier man in all Austria than myself; yet I have a hankering after *home*, which, as it is built upon laudable motives, I cannot wish to suppress. I have often thought that not one in a hundred of you odd fellows, who wallow in the luxury of the land you live in, knows the value of the enjoyments which are within his reach. For my own part, I never think of John Bull and his *little proud island* without a singular pleasure. There is a *queerness* in John that I delight in; there is a stamp upon him—a character—a variety—a manliness, which nothing can come up to; and then John's women are so fresh and tidy, his grass so green, his mutton and claret so good, his *house so much his own*, that I cannot relinquish my share of those advantages.

I hope you do not suppose from all this, that I am fool enough to give way to a boyish impatience, which sours the present pleasures, by anticipating, and perhaps over-rating futurity. No, my Brad,—I am desirous to *earn* my bread before I sit down to eat it; and my only *secret* is to be contented now, with the certainty of

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being still happier hereafter. I question whether any of your brethren of the Cabinet possess a more valuable nostrum than the one I boast of; but I have affection and gratitude enough towards several of them, to wish that they may: and so you are at liberty to say in my name, to Lord North, and Lord Suffolk, and Mr. Rigby; assuring them that no man on earth is more sincerely attached to them than, dear Brad,

Your's,

R. M. K.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

19*th January*, 1772.

I SEND you with this letter, the report of the Secret Committee upon the state of the East India Company. That business is of the utmost importance, and will be productive of much honour, or much mischief, to *our friends*. At this moment, I doubt, there is no plan. It is resolved (indeed that must be done) to support the Company, by lending them the sum they want, which you will see is about 1,400,000*l.*; and I believe it is also resolved, that the surplus of the year, instead of being applied towards the discharge of the debt, should be applied to this purpose. But to support them at the present moment, will be doing very little, unless that assistance is followed by regulations, to prevent the shameful mismanagement, both at home and abroad, which has brought the Company into their present situation. Some very strong facts have already come out, against more than one of the *nabobs*, who have returned laden with money of the Company's, and the spoils of the wretched inhabitants of Indostan. I never saw such a spirit as appeared in the House, and seems to actuate every individual, upon the affair of the *Matout*, which came out against a certain Mr. Sykes, as

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you will have read in the public papers. Mr. Sykes, in a second defence, which he attempted some days after, declared he had only followed Lord Clive's example. If this comes out in proof (and there are many who say it can, and shall,) the punishment of such offenders must be undertaken by government, whatever their connections, or parliamentary interest may be; and even this act of justice will, from many circumstances not unknown to you, prove a delicate and difficult business.

You have heard of all the misery and distress which has fallen upon the commercial world. It has not in the smallest degree affected our friends, which I am sure will give you pleasure. Poor Shah Allum* has been upon the brink of bankruptcy, and is at this moment supported by a subscription of 100,000*l.* from bankers and merchants, set on foot by our friends.† To what a situation has the little mortal brought himself from being master of 300,000*l.*, and of a business from which he could draw 12,000*l.* per annum! You, my dear Chevalier, are in the high road to enormous wealth. You cannot fail, in your present walk of life, to amass *many plums*. I charge you, take warning by Shah Allum; and don't let the desire of a *fifth plum*, rob you of the *four*, which I take for granted you have nearly completed!

All that you love here, love, remember, and regret you. If our parties are dull, you are wished for to enliven them; if cheerful, you are longed for, that you may have your share of them. There is not a D—, or a B—, or any honest letter in the alphabet that is not devoted to you, and would not willingly make you a partaker of our pleasures; because, by coming to claim

* Sir George Colebrooke, an Indian Millionaire of the day.

† Messrs. Drummonds, of Charing Cross.

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your share, you would more than double our stock. Finish your business, obtain your well deserved reward; and "live with us, and be our love," as the old song says. Adieu, my dear friend; I write in the utmost hurry; but with still more truth than haste, I subscribe myself, Ever yours,

T. B.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, February 17th, 1773.

My servants are not arrived, nor do I know anything of them. To be sure, these gentlemen are the bearers of the joint *labours* of all my London friends, and I shall have at least one letter from your honour; and I have no right to scold—for that was so snug an opportunity of writing—and saved postage, &c. Nonsense! nonsense! my dear Brad; my anxiety does not brook such calm deliberation; my stomach cannot feed upon air for four months, in order to make a more hearty meal at the end of them. In short, I am angry, and I say so frankly, because I can neither be sulky nor silent. If the *Gang* has found out any man who is more cordially attached to them than I am, let them put him in my place, in God's name—but if not, pray do you help them to recollect, that He who made me, gave me the warmest and strongest feelings, and that nothing can put these feelings to a more severe trial than the silence of that set of people whom I love in preference to all others. I bar all flimsy excuses on their part—of—"I have not a moment's time"—"I hate pen and ink"—"I love my friend, but I can't write." Take my word for it, he who is obstinate in depriving his friend of a very sensible pleasure, which would cost him but a three minutes' trouble, is either very selfish, or very lukewarm. How do you like my logic, Mr. Brad? I think it pretty conclusive; *ergo*, (for I will positively

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scold out this page) my bosom friends are a parcel of careless, callous blockheads; and you, dear sir, are very deservedly the leader of them.

This is the third time I have tuned the vocal shell since my arrival here, and to "hills and dales," as the song says, "did I my passion tell," for not a human creature answered. The same may happen to me now; but, like Sawbridge on septennial parliaments, I will renew my motion, in hopes of a less profligate majority; and show to those who can read, that our ancestors, from the days of Alfred, down to those of the tyrannical reign of Henry the Eighth, laid it down as a principle, that friendship might outlive an absence of twelve calendar months.

But hang it! I can't harp any more upon that old string. Have not I got Prince Schwartzerberg, and Prince Trautsohn, and Count Trautmansdorff, and Count Zinzendorff de Pottendorff, who doat upon me? Other guess people these than your Brads, and Freds, and Bobs, and Harrys—fellows with names of no sound or dignity! Have I not the Princess of Khevenhuller Metch, and the Baroness of Kollowrath Kraskofsky, the Countess of Schrettenbach, and the Dowager of Rumpenhausen? all ladies of sixty quarters, who speak High German and Sclavonic, whose very maids of honour would turn up their sharp noses at your Bessys, and Ferrys, and Tattys? With these will I live, in their palaces and castles, and, like a great man as I am, wipe out the memory of past connections. If I could but prevail upon his Majesty to lengthen my name, by five or six syllables, I do not despair of obtaining the hand of the fair Feretina de Podstackzky Lichtenstein, niece to Count Grazalkovicz de Gyarach, Conservator of the Crown of the Kingdom of Hungary, &c., &c.

But, alas! while I carry the little stunted name of Keith, there is no aiming at that honour! Don't you

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now, Mr. Brad, go to imagine that I am again in good-humour with you, because I write nonsense! No, truly—nature had indeed like to have got the better; but I won't be in good-humour, I 'll never be in good-humour, and if I am so, I will at least not own it, to such people as you. I don't desire to be remembered to anybody. I scorn bankers, brokers, agents, commissioners, lords register, and lords of Admiralty; I don't care who governs your paltry island, or who sits as chairman of committees. The day may come, when the best of you may have business to transact in the Holy Roman Empire, and then, you will seek the protection of,

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH,

Knight of the most Honourable Order of the Bath, Colonel of Departed Infantry, Laird of the Manors of Murrayshall, Beghouse, &c., in the country of Tweeddale, and His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary, and Plenipotentiary at the Court of their Imperial, Royal, and Apostolic Majesties, &c., &c., &c.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, March 7th, 1773.

AT length, dear Anne, I have one of your sheets, and welcome it was, as I began to think the Hermits had lost the faculty of inditing. I have received all the preceding letters (my father's included) which you mention; and when you shall have hold of this missive, it will be the eighth of all denominations I shall have transmitted to the Hermitage from Vienna. This being premised, I must remember that my folio must be an outlandish journal.

I wish Lent were in the Pope's inside! or that a good comedy were a part of the papistical penance! Cards, cards, cards! You must know I never touch them in jest or earnest; and therefore am the most useless of God's creatures. "*Monsieur—joue-t-il?*"

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"Non." "Comment? Monsieur ne joue pas à aucun jeu?" "Non." "Mais cela est inoui!"—et puis on laisse là Monsieur pour jamais. I, your unworthy brother, lost thirty bowing acquaintances, male and female, in the first six weeks, by the above laconic answers to two simple questions; and yet I am incorrigible, for cards and I are incompatible. I never tire, that's one thing; I can look pleasant for a week together, and feel comfortable, and laugh cheerfully, when it comes to my turn; and all without cards. *Ergo*, why should I play?

March 12*th*.

I have fallen upon an excellent way to please the public in the article of card-playing, without sacrificing my own five senses, to a parcel of red and black spots. A lady, who is generally remarkably lucky at cards, but who had lately a bad run of about a week, complained t'other day loudly of her misfortunes, and said she must soon relinquish cards, her favourite amusement. I immediately thought I might strike an advantageous bargain with this dear creature, and satisfy all mankind. I therefore agreed to attack Dame Fortune with *my* money and *her* fingers; and now she plays her three parties every day in my name, and at my risk; and I am now one of the prettiest card-players in Vienna—*by proxy!* This agreement has amused the whole town; and I am in no danger of being a loser by it in the end, as she plays well and luckily, and for very small sums. *"Monsieur le Chevalier Keith est bien aimable;"* —dit on, *"il joue au loup par procureur."* * Aye!

* Sir R. Keith little thought, perhaps, that in granting this "deputation" to the keen little sportswoman, he was enlisting in his Royal Master's service an equally staunch ally. When, a few years later, (in Sir R. Keith's absence,) an emissary from the revolted American Colonies was surreptitiously introduced at Prince Kaunitz's by the French Ambassador, "*la petite veuve*," (as she was called), declared he should "never either dine or play cards there while she presided, were she to be a winner by it, of *ten thousand crowns!*"

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and next Carnival I will hire me a dancer, and skip by *procuration also!* You may tell my father that the lady in question is a widow, Countess Clary; perhaps he does not remember her. She is a Saxon, and does the honours at Prince Kaunitz's. A little, fat, round, tidy body, and extremely good-humoured.

But I must have done for this evening, as my friend the Venetian Ambassador is coming to chat at my fireside. This letter of mine is pretty much in the style of that conversation; but so much the better, for I am so tired of spreading politics upon paper, that I am happy to find some vent for my own native nonsense. They say people read ministers' letters upon the road. Whoever has the good fortune to peruse this epistle, with the eye of a politician, will say (and perhaps not without reason) that his Britannic Majesty has sent the idlest fellow in all his dominions to reside in the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. I have a great mind to tell that same anxious gentleman, that the aforesaid idle fellow is happier in himself and in his friends, than any ten of the wisest and gravest diplomatical Dons in Christendom. But I must positively have done, for I hear the Venetian Senator coughing upon my staircase! Adieu.

R. M. K.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. MURRAY KEITH.

South Audley-street, 8th March, 1773.

I NEVER in my life could make an *excuse* to a man I loved, and to whom I had not behaved as I ought. You, my dear Keith, stand in both those situations, and I have not impudence enough to use any arms in my defence, but submission and penitence. I am not only unpardonable to you, but to myself; for if I had written to you I should have had more letters from you, and I

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should also have deserved them better; but then I must have showed them to *Miss Fanny Murray*,* and I must have heard that there is no such man, for public or private correspondence, as Sir Robert Keith; that it was the most fortunate circumstance of Fanny's life to know and be connected with you, as the most able assistant and most pleasing friend! Not one word of this is true of this same Sir Robert Keith; and yet this, and far more, was I obliged to hear from Fanny a few days ago, who wished to know if you were happy. I had your own picture in my pocket, drawn by your own masterly hand; and I gave it to Fanny, who, to be serious, makes me jealous, for she seems to love you better than I do. I have promised to show *her* your private correspondence at the Retreat. *She* told me that every day convinced her of your superiority in your line; that she had not more confidence in herself than in you; and upon my saying something of your attachment and regard, she disclaimed having ever had it in her power to show you favour, and said you had been much more useful to *her* than she had been to you, and added, that your merit was as much felt in a *certain place*, as by her and I. Write to me now, Monsieur le Chevalier; forgive me my past negligence and omissions; for though I fear I can't hurt you with *Fanny* or her *master*, yet I will not be *bored* about you, nor will I report my borings to you unless I am paid for it.

It is now necessary, my dear Keith, that I should tell you that many vexations which are now over, and which it would answer no purpose to tell you (or you should have them to the last grievance), have really prevented me from fulfilling my promise and indulging my

* The private cypher name for Lord Suffolk, the official, principal, and private friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

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inclination to converse with you in this only way that is in my power. In future, you shall have no occasion to complain of me; believe this, and forget that you have had any.

I saw *the governor of Jamaica to-day* in perfect health. "Who the d—l is the governor of Jamaica?" quoth you. "Why, one Sir Basil Keith," replies the Brad. If I had not behaved like a dog to you, perhaps you would have opened my letter the first of the parcel by this pacquet, and I should have had the supreme felicity of first informing you that *our Basil* has had that government conferred upon him in the most flattering, as well as the most honourable manner; refusing all recommendation to Lord Dartmouth, though he was offered an application from the first merchants; and having for competitors, Frederick Vane, Sir Alexander Gilmour, and Sir *George Rodney*, for whom I know the strongest interest was made from very respectable quarters. Well, this is not to the purpose, for Basil will tell you all these particulars, and I will not take the trouble of telling you how much I rejoice at this event; for if you were ten times as angry with me, you would nevertheless do me the justice to suppose all that.

My poor wife has lost our last-born child, and is in great affliction; but she desires to be remembered in the kindest manner. Though my girl was but five months old, I lost her with a regret which none but a Keith or a father can feel. Peace be with her!

Our governor Bob* has his foot upon the stool of repentance, for having rode a stumbling nag; but he will soon be well, and, in the mean time, he reads Dalrymple and laughs at patriots. Poor Rigby has the gout in both feet. He had your letter, and we drink your health at least once a week. If he could do you a

* Robert Drummond, Esq.

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pleasure or a service, I will venture to say neither the gout nor any trouble would prevent his immediately attempting it. Why are all these people as much attached to you as I am, when they don't know you half so well?

Harry,* Fred,† with all the women, are well, and as profligate as ever. Loo still goes on, and the Governor of Jamaica will be *picked* and *pigeoned*, as his dignity demands. Miss Chalmers,‡ too, enquires after you, and calls you the first of ministers, and she thinks so. Her situation is a strange one; she is more unconnected than ever, and nothing but necessity keeps her where she now is.

Adieu, my dear friend,

J. B.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

South Audley-street, 11th March, 1773.

If there is any one subject upon which you write better than another, it is when you are pleased to express your indignation against your humble servants, who, for their sins, are condemned to pass their lives in this paltry island; to fast upon our beef and claret, and never to behold the sunshine of their Imperial, Royal, and Apostolic Majesties. These circumstances, *mon cher Chevalier*, ought to plead our excuse; in such situations the minds of men are not likely to be at ease, and why should they attempt to poison your enjoyment of the uninterrupted pleasures of Vienna, by their grievances?

They envy you no happiness; you want no increase; they love you too well to tease you with unavailing wishes, though they all lick their lips at your princes,

* Henry Drummond, Esq. † Lord Frederick Campbell.
‡ The cypher name for Lord North.

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and rather blush when they are obliged to name their own shabby enjoyments. But times may mend; the Duchesses of Gloucester and Cumberland have opened their doors two evenings in every week, and as their assemblies do not fill, some of the "*Gang*" may get admittance; and when we can send you Royal anecdotes, Lord have mercy upon you! *Super, extra*-extraordinaries will not pay your postage!

The Drummonds, male and female, are well. Harry and Bess are the same laughing, good-humoured pair they used to be; and Bob and Tatty no worse. Fred and Ferry are neither fatter nor leaner; the Sebrights talk for ever of you, and her ladyship's passion does not seem abated by your absence. In short, the whole "*Gang*," with all their adherents, flourish. None of them have been brought to justice since you left them, but Sir Basil, who, being an old offender, is very deservedly *cast for transportation*.

Your letter of the 17th February was the best of all possible letters. I gave it to Lord North to read last night at the Oratorio; and he laughed aloud, in the face of the King, over against whom we happened to be sitting.*

* That some of Sir R. M. Keith's familiar epistles (though not exactly the facetious one in question) found their way to Royalty itself, seems not improbable; from his Majesty, in an audience to a young nobleman from Vienna, (the Earl of Morton,) when speaking in the highest terms of Sir Robert, alluding particularly to his "*delightful letters*." This epithet can hardly be deemed applicable to official dispatches, notwithstanding the terms in which the latter are characterised by Mr. Eden, (afterwards Lord Auckland,) then Under Secretary in the Foreign Department, in August 1774. "You will think yourself entitled to a much fuller acknowledgment of your dispatches than you have yet received. But what could we do? It would have been *no compliment* to you to say that in your description of the Imperial Cabinet, you had contrived to blend sound politics and *sterling wit*, in a degree of which this office has seen few instances. And when that idea was known to have presented itself to *all* to whom the dispatches in question were submitted, it was not the

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You have only to choose your name: Lord North says he will not stand with you for a dozen of syllables; and he desires me to express his wishes that his friends on this side of the water would content themselves with such reasonable requests. I will give your list of princes and counts to Bob, to break Castleton's heart. If he thought you would introduce him as a *Joblinowsky* at any of your great dinners, he would set out post for Vienna.

I have been under some apprehensions of mischief for the last two days; but Mrs. *Tattina loves nonsense as much as ever.** If it had been otherwise, *Miss Smith*† would have been where you wish to see *Fanny Murray*.‡

A French regiment, returning from the East Indies, has taken a new method of making a rise in the corps. The officers had a quarrel with the Lieutenant-Colonel, and as they could not bring him to their way of thinking, they very politely threw him out of the cabin window. I should have no objection to a good number of those who are between you and *your* regiment, taking the benefit of sea-bathing in the same manner. I told Rigby I should write to you to-day, and he desires to be cordially remembered. *You sober fellows* never come to good! He is a martyr to gout.

Past four o'Clock, Thursday morning.

I am this moment returned from Lord Harrington's,§ where I have been playing at loo with Lady H., and some vile cats, who have robbed me, without giving me a moment's entertainment. Patience! I owe his

part of friendship to make further fuss about it. Ostracism is at an end; but few of us can yet bear to read much of the merits of a *live man*, if they are very great."

* Lord North is strong, and will continue so. (Private cypher.)

† Lord Gower. ‡ The Earl of Suffolk.

§ Then Secretary of State for the War Department.

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lordship more than that; and, therefore, with an aching head, and empty purse, I will go to sleep.

Good night, dear Keith,

J. B.

11 *o'Clock.*

I am as dull this morning as the dullest Dutchman of your acquaintance, and I shall doze over this whole page before I leave my fireside. Something whispers to me, whenever I see Basil, that he will marry before he goes to his government, though I have no suspicion of any human, or divine woman. But he has twice told me, that if he could get a *right woman*, to be his friend and comforter, his happiness at Jamaica would be complete; and he has promised me *not* to marry a rich planter's widow, who is her own *negro-driver*.

Friday morning, 26th.

There is a report that the first regiment of Guards will be resigned. *Your friend* * had once a promise of it. I daresay the same *prudence* and *moderation* which made him refuse the Ordnance, will make him also refuse this regiment *at present*.

If you had not scoffed at my *roasted Directors*, what a fine account would this letter bring you, of a very extraordinary day in the House of Commons, on Monday last; when Burgoyne moved a resolution "*that no person entrusted with military or civil power could, by virtue of such power, acquire territories, or revenues, or any property for himself. That such acquisitions, when so made, belonged to the State; that several persons had illegally acquired large sums of money;*" and he concluded by saying, that he meant to follow these resolutions by one for obliging such persons to make *restitution*.

* General Conway.

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I will only tell you that the Nabobs are on the gridiron, but you shall *not* have a steak. I *could* tell you, in five sides of paper, that Wedderburn, as a defence of Lord Clive, told Burgoyne, "*that those who throw stones should not live in glass houses;*" that he mentioned the charge made by Junius against the Colonel—that the Colonel cried aloud, "If *Junius* be in the house, or lurking in the gallery, he is an infamous lying scoundrel, and a cowardly assassin, and I will treat him as he deserves, whenever the miscreant is dragged forth to light"—that—but hang me if I write a word more upon the subject; and you may lick your lips, and wish you had not ridiculed my intelligence. Cocked and primed as I am, I should have run you off six sheets of writing before dinner; five of which will be lost, not only to you, but to the world, when your *State Papers* come to be published!

Things are not so satisfactory, and we have this day stopped paying off the men who were raised for the fleet. Take that as a political sop in the pan; but not a single cut of the roast; no, Sir, I will leave you to the imperfect information of Secretaries of State, and such fellows.

I have been at Portsmouth with the Earls of Suffolk, Sandwich, Rochfort, and Gower; and passed three days exceedingly to my satisfaction. I saw everything, and every kind of work performed in the yards, storehouses, bakehouses, &c. We went to Spithead in a yacht, and were saluted by the sixteen ships of the line, every one of which was manned, and lined with marines, as we sailed by them. We dined on board the Admiral, with all the Captains of the fleet; and I never saw so respectable a sight as the circle of brave fellows with whom I sat at table, every one of whom was fit to command the navy of England. The lords were delighted, and they have all sworn to use their utmost endeavours

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to prevail on the King to see his fleet, which would certainly be exceedingly popular. Lord Suffolk talked of you every day. I showed him parts of your last letter, which pleased him much, and he desired me to tell you that *Osten** is sent to the very castle which was intended for the *Queen*. He said he had secret things to write you when he had a *proper opportunity*. I will write you the particulars you desire to know, about *Fanny Murray*, when a messenger goes to Vienna; of which *Fraser*† has promised to give me timely notice.

3 *o'Clock.*

I am this moment returned from St. James's, where I saw the remonstrance presented by the Lord Mayor, the Recorder, one Sheriff, one Alderman, and about ten shabby Common-councilmen. What a respectable voice of the people! His Majesty sent out word by the Lord Chamberlain, that he would not allow them to kiss his hand. Lord Mayor answered, he came there only *officially*, and thought his Majesty was *perfectly right*. When they were introduced to the Throne, Lord Chamberlain said to the King, "Sir, I am desired by the Lord Mayor to acquaint your Majesty, that he came here only *officially*." The remonstrance was then read by the Recorder, to which the King gave a most excellent answer, which I am sorry I cannot send you in his own words. The purport was, that he should be unjust to doubt that his people were convinced of his readiness, at all times, to hear, and redress their just complaints; but, at the same time, it would be highly improper to give the smallest countenance to ill-grounded jealousies, and misrepresentations; that the present application was so unfounded, and conceived in such disrespectful

* Count Osten, Foreign Minister of Denmark, of whose duplicity Sir R. M. Keith complains, during its unhappy revolution in 1772.

† Mr. Fraser, Private Secretary to the Earl of Suffolk.

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terms, that he could not believe they seriously expected that any notice would be taken of it.

Adieu, my dear Chevalier.

P. S.—I shall speedily summon the committee of the "Gang" whom you have chosen to provide and propose a future lady. We all deprecate a Transylvanian or Croatian countess. If your house should be uncomfortable, it will be a cruel stroke upon the evening of my life. *Apropos* to marriage, the Duke of Orleans has followed some great examples in this country; and owned his marriage with Madame de Montesson; but all this you know better than I do, from the Dauphiness' private letters. Yours,

J. B.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, March 27th, 1773.

Oho! my Lord! you are upon your marrowbones; are ye? and *peccavi* is the word. I thought I should bring you to that; but (as Billy Amherst says), his Majesty's troops *never plunder*, nor *kick those who are down*; therefore, I stretch out the friendly hand to lift you upon your legs again. And now, we start afresh, with the cordial innocence of two twin-brothers newly ushered into life by the skilful hand of Dr. Hunter.

Do you know, my dear Brad, that it is a shame for you, who have been bred in all the cursed, callous company of courtiers, jobbers, boroughmongers, and piebald parliament-men, to prove such a dunghill cock, in the article of facing an angry friend. Why, there is not an understrapper in office who would not have fought a better battle than you did. Whereas you just now submit to be looked upon as an honest good-natured fellow; which is an error in judgment, a want of *parts* (as Peter Taylor said of my father, when he returned home a beggar). *Apropos* to beggar! what

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say you to Sir Basil? His Excellency the Governor? Lord! lord! when will the beneficence of my royal master end? As I hope for mercy, 'tis a fair heat, the King against the Keiths—goodness against gratitude! and a close run thing it will be, as any match at Newmarket these ten years. I'll tell you one thing, Brad, there's an old gentleman in the kingdom—the parent of the Keiths, one who is blest with fine feelings, and a steady good heart. I must think that the breath of that man's blessing upon the royal hand which deals out honour and opulence to all his family, may create a pleasing sensation, and be something more than an empty tribute of thanks. What must I do, my friend, to keep pace with so many accumulated favours? Why, what I can; and that with a zeal, an ardent zeal, adequate to the call upon me; and if Heaven shall please to grant me an opportunity, my Suffolks, my Norths, my Rigbys, and all my *Gang* shall not blush for me. I write to worthy Lord Dartmouth; and if I write nonsense to him, it shall be the nonsense of a full heart. My sweet and beautiful Basil has ere this got fairly astride upon his government; and I trust that by dint of good plain sense, and fair dealing, he will sit very snug in the saddle. The fellow has a warm heart, and despises money; and that, my lord, goes a good way in the qualification of a governor. I made him swear to avoid partialities, and set speeches, and to remember who got him, and made him what he is.*

* Akin to this judicious and fraternal counsel, was that given to the new functionary by the highest legal authority of his native land. On learning that his commission as Governor, also involved within it that of Chief Judge of the Island, (one alike alien to the habits and feelings of a sailor), he expressed to the great Lord Mansfield his conscientious scruples on the subject. His Lordship's answer soon removed them: "Basil," said he, "you have excellent common sense; always decide according to that, and nine times in ten you will be right. But mind, never give a *reason* for your decision; that will infallibly be wrong!"

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Oh! I'll be bound for Basil! he may do an unwise thing, but I'll be hang'd if (willingly) he either does an unjust or a mean one.

I am preparing for a visit this summer from my good friend Mr. Conway. It is an old promise, and I hope he will have no reason to repent the performance of it. We have rare shows for soldiers here, and some too for fine gentlemen like yourself, if you were not so d—dly lazy.

But now, my Brad, let me talk to you about your three letters, for I have no less than three in one week, and excellent ones they are. The first, by the faithful *Nat*, was hum-drum, and written in low spirits. I knew that you had some devilry in your head, or that your heart was not at ease. It would have puzzled my poor brain to guess at your distress, in order to share it; but luckily your other two letters, penned in high good humour, came to relieve me. By the bye, the book of Bunbury's prints was a present worthy of an emperor; and I should hardly have exchanged it against a patent of Prince of his Holy Empire. I laughed myself black in the face at the "*Shaver* and the *Shavee*;" and my German servants, who had never heard the vulgar sound of a loud laugh, ran into the room to see what the deuce had befallen his Excellency. You must know that we never laugh here beyond a gentle simper, that dimples the cheek, unless when a grandee or a dear creature happens to be immoderately witty, and then we indulge them with a flying titter. They say through Europe that John Bull is a grave, morose fellow; but hang me if John does not shake his fat sides with ten times the glee that I ever saw since I left him. My service to every body that wishes me back for home consumption.

Yours,

R. M. K.

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MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

South Audley-street, 16th March, 1773.

THE Jamaica people residing here are really pleased with the appointment of Sir Basil, who was well known to many of them upon the island. I am assured, from good authority, that he may *may do the thing properly,* and yet save at least 4000*l.* a year. To be sure that is very short of what your Excellency saves at Vienna, but what of that? Sir Basil ought to be content, as he is but a younger brother. He has laid down very prudent rules for his conduct while in England, and at his Government respecting his *subjects;* and if I do not much mistake his character, he will be firm to them. I congratulated your worthy father the day Sir Basil was appointed, with a satisfaction that is not to be expressed. I impatiently wait for his answer, as I shall have a new pleasure in sharing the happiness which his letter describes. He is the most amiable of men, *though your father.* I wish he were less unfortunate in his children.

I wish *you* had provided for the Queen of Denmark upon some other fund;* not but that Jamaica will bear it exceedingly well; and to be sure you will deservedly be very popular for sacrificing poor Basil, for the sake of her Danish Majesty. Let you alone for patriotic deeds! Suppose you were to pay off the debts of the Civil List out of your own appointments? It would be very acceptable, at least to the creditors; and you would be likely, in that case, to receive the money from me for the china.

* To the original of this letter is still affixed with sealing-wax, a newspaper paragraph, to the following purport. "It is confidently said the Queen of Denmark is to have 5000*l. a year,* out of the salary and emoluments of a certain government lately given away. Still may he sing the Highland Queen!" A correspondent asks, "What would Admiral Boscawen have said, if alive, to see his little Scotch Midshipman so wonderfully promoted?"

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Apropos, Lord Holland has once more paid Stephen Fox's debts, which amounted to the trifling sum of 86,000*l.*! Charles's, I am informed, from very good authority, are ascertained, and as they only rise to 110,000*l.*, it will be shabby if his father should leave them unpaid. Charles pays 10,400*l.* a year in annuities; and many of the annuitants who have been applied to, declare that they will not sell them, as they are regularly paid. His establishment, exclusive of his race horses (which must be considered as his *Ways and Means*), is calculated to cost upwards of 6,000*l.* a year, so that he must annually raise a supply of 17,000*l.* for the current expenses; besides his bill of *extraordinaires*, incurred and *not provided for*. You must agree with me that he is a *great financier*, and his practical knowledge must enable him to cut a very brilliant figure at the head of the treasury, when he gets there. Adieu, my dear Keith; if your patience is not tired, you are Job himself. The Duke of Grafton, who has this moment called upon me, and to whom I showed the *measure of your infliction*, desires to be remembered in the kindest manner.

There is a report very current that Miss Chalmers * is going to retire, but it is without the smallest foundation. I shall not, however, be surprised when there is foundation for the report, though I shall be sincerely sorry.

Once more adieu,

J. B.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

South Audley-street, 23rd March, 1773.

HAZY weather, Master Noah! upon the Continent; but you know more of the matter than I do, and,

* Lord North.

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besides, what has that to do with *our* correspondence? which, thanks be to nonsense, cannot be affected by the ambition or timidity of any, or all of the powers of Europe?

The India business begins to grow serious; not for government, but for the *men of millions*. A report will to-morrow be laid before the House, by the Secret Committee, which will state the revenues of the East India Company in India, and the malversations of their servants abroad; it will be followed by strong instances of (at *least*) mismanagement in their Directors at home. Sir George Colebrooke and Purling have quitted the Direction, as being likely to be accused persons; and it will not be an easy matter to settle a house list of Directors for the election next month. The Duke of Richmond has qualified himself for a Director, and is at the head of the proprietors' list, of which, if they succeed, he is to be chairman. His Grace lives in the city, and attends all general courts; at one of which he was told, that nothing showed the low state of opposition so strongly, as that his Grace was reduced to harangue at Leadenhall Street, from having no other place where he could display his oratory. The choice of Directors appears to me, at this moment, to be one of the most difficult matters that government has to manage. There is no time for manœuvring; and it is a serious business to intrust the loan of 1,500,000*l.*, which the public are to lend the Company, in the hands of persons against whom, I am informed, very strong matters of accusation will be brought out by the two committees. The House has this day resolved that the dividend shall not exceed six per cent. till this loan is paid off; nor seven per cent. till their bond debts shall be reduced to 1,500,000*l.*

I send you the remonstrance, which is to be presented next Friday. The Lord Mayor had doubts about its

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legality, and would not consent to present it till he had the Recorder's opinion that he could not incur a penalty. You will remember that his lordship was the chief promoter of the first remonstrance; and, upon being asked why he had so much altered his opinion about remonstrances, he said, because he found they answered no good purpose; as he hoped, that if the first was disregarded, the next step would be *drawing the sword!*

Adieu, my dear Keith,

J. B.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, April 6th, 1773.

Our correspondence, my dear Brad, now canters along in the pleasantest manner imaginable; not a rub—not a ruffle—all velvet and green sward. My only fear is, that you will soon discover that you have a bad bargain of it; and that giving every week a salmon for a minnow (to speak in the style of our friend Piscator*) may be generous, but by no means profitable. What the devil can I do for materials to pay for the postage, and for wherewithal to satisfy the curiosity of a man of fashion like you? What are trifles to a man who has the condescension to talk to me of Committees and Carib wars, of roasted Directors, and all the wonders of Leadenhall-street?

But I must descend from this sublime subject, and stoop to treat of vulgar men and things. The Governor of Jamaica (I beg his Excellency's pardon for putting him in that list) is certainly in the way of being very rich; and I own I am curious to see what sort of a monster a *monied Keith* will make. I was tempted some time ago to try the experiment in my own person, but as Sir Basil is in a speedier line of wealth, I mean

* Robert Drummond, Esq., whose love of angling is often alluded to.

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to give over the pursuit, and dispose of his Majesty's bounty in giving the travelling Johns some good beef and claret. Could I but tempt three or four of the *Gang* to share in the spoil, that would be a blessing indeed. But you are too snug at home, and too lazy all of you, ever to try your fortunes in foreign parts.

Ten thousand thanks to you, Brad, for your well-chosen scraps of newspapers. How the devil did the Public Advertiser find out the story of the 5000*l.* pension upon Jamaica?* But the fellow smelt out my own private pension of 3000*l.*† the very day I got it! Mr. Woodfall is a jewel of a man for a bit of secret intelligence.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR ROBERT M. KEITH.

South Audley-street, 2nd April, 1773.

Poor Sir George Colebrook, who has for many weeks been fluctuating between immediate bankruptcy and the hopes of collecting from his scattered fortunes a sufficiency to keep his bank afloat, was obliged yesterday to stop. I never esteemed or liked him, but I am among the very few who pity his family, and feel for what the poor man must suffer, who, by his own eagerness for accumulation, has been thrown from a splendid fortune to (I fear) a doubtful competency; for I never knew the wreck of a great bankruptcy turn out according to the expectations of those who thought themselves best informed of the value of the effects. I flatter myself this event will have no influence upon the banking business; but of this I shall be able to inform you before I finish my letter. Our friends cannot be alarmed,

* The absurd story before alluded to, and *extant* in the *printed* fragment appended to Mr. Bradshaw's letter, of the *Queen of Denmark* being thus provided for at Sir Basil Keith's expense.

† Equally apocryphal, it is needless to say, with the above.

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but must stand, firm as a rock, even if there should be a storm.*

There is no truth in the report that Sir Basil had 20,000*l.* in Sir George's hand, which I mention, lest it should have reached you and made you uneasy. Allow me now, my dear Chevalier, to request that when you have paid the due tribute of sorrow to Sir George's mishap, you will draw a useful lesson from what has happened to him. You are now (by Mr. Woodfall's† favour) in a situation that produces you a large share of 50,000*l.* per annum, which he very truly states to be received by a *few Murrays*. Content yourself, my dear friend, for the present, even with the 15,000*l.* or 20,000*l.* a-year you at present enjoy, and do not, like the unfortunate Baronet, by too eagerly grasping at more, lose the *trifle* I have stated you to possess, upon such respectable and undoubted authority.

I have not paid you for your china yet, but the good time will come, if no more bankers break. The times are hard, and the poor of all ranks are severely pinched. Even Charles Fox finds a difficulty in raising money. He was under a necessity of staking 2000*l.* at Newmarket last Monday, for some matches that were to be run that day. The twelve tribes of Israel were all tried, but their hearts were uncircumcised and hard, and he could not raise a single guinea. He declared this at White's and Almack's on the preceding Friday night; he seriously offered 6000*l.* at the end of six months, for an immediate supply of 3000*l.*; and, at last, thinking himself sure of winning his *matches*, he offered 500*l.* for the loan of 2000*l.*, till the following Tuesday night. No offers would tempt his *friends*, nor soften the hard hearts of the Jews; and poor Charles was in the last stage of distress. In *this*

* The Messrs. Drummonds.

† Editor of the Public Advertiser, and publisher of Junius.

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situation, with five guineas, his whole fortune, in his pocket, he came into White's an hour before dinner on Saturday; there he found Harry Cavendish, (the House of Commons note-writer) with whom he began to play billiards for a guinea; and having a run of luck, he won, with the assistance of some bets, eighty-five guineas; which enabled him to go to Almack's at night, where, without losing one cast, he won 3000*l.*! His good fortune then left him, and he lost back 700*l.*; but he cut at three o'clock in the morning, with 2300*l.*, which enabled him to make his stakes at Newmarket. All this I know to be exactly true. I have not heard what he did at Newmarket, but I will venture to pronounce, that no Lord of the Treasury ever had such a practical knowledge of *circulation*, nor such extensive dealings with the *monied interest* of this country. If he escapes a pistol in a gloomy hour, when the *ways and means* are desperate, what has not this country to expect when he is at the head of its finances.

Friday Evening.

Charles Fox has lost every shilling he had, at Newmarket! The great meeting is Monday se'nnight, and he must win more than 3000*l.*, for none can he borrow. Lord Tyrawley not yet dead; no resignation; the ribbons not yet given away. Rigby still suffering in the gout. Oh! for a letter from you, to make him laugh in the violence of the fit!

Has Basil written you the conversation he had at Court with the lovely Mrs. D'Oyley?* "Give me leave, *Sir John*, to wish you joy, which I do with great pleasure. How is the *General* at *Berlin?* And give me leave to inquire after the worthy old gentleman. Pray how is *Sir Charles?*" Upon the honour of a cream-coloured gentleman, I am a faithful historian, and make

* A lady of the day famous for her *mimomere*.

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no additions. But she could make no mistake equal to poor D'Oyley's, when he married her.

Lord Clive is to make his defence on Monday, in the House of Commons. He has published his famous speech, which I will send you by the first messenger.

Adieu, my dear friend,

T. B.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

April 6th, 1773.

When I have written your Excellency five complete dozen of letters, perhaps I shall hear from you again. I feel daggers at my disappointment, but will write none.

An express is this day arrived from Portsmouth with letters from St. Vincent. The Caribs were totally subdued, and a peace made with them, the 17th of last February; the total loss of our troops is about 110 men.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, April 23rd, 1773.

What an abominable little spitfire dog of a letter your's of the 6th April is! I feel daggers, say you, but I will write none. Yes, but you will, Mr. Brad, and poisoned ones too; but I have a target which is proof against them all, and that target is *innocence immaculate*. Can you forget, you base man you, that five long months had passed without a line? But I will be calm. I received several of your letters together. I wrote instantly to thank you, and have been scribbling ever since, and here am I abused and vilified. *Sed integer vitæ, scelerisque purus*, &c. I wish your lordship understood Latin, for I have twenty quotations at my fingers' ends, which would cut you up most classically. But I shall have a peace-offering from you by next post, and all will be well again.

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To have done with the *see-saw* of recrimination, let me tell you a bit of my mind, and upon a very serious subject. You must know, my friend, that I have for the last fortnight been cogitating, and comparing, and *rule of three-ing*, all my ways and means of happiness. I have said to myself—"Thou hast struggled through life cheerfully, and (with the help of such friends as few men possess), thou hast reached the level of thy utmost wish, at an age when enjoyment ought to take the place of ambition. If I mistake thee not, thy turn is domestic, and the scene of thy enjoyment must be under thine own roof. What is thy hobby-horse?—A *woman!* Dost thou require an angel, an heiress, or a Catherine Macauley? No, no, no! a fireside companion, with a hale constitution, and a delicate mind."

Thus far have I gone in soliloquy—the rest remains with you and Fred, and Bob and Harry, and the Hays, who, in self-defence, must provide me with a British housewife; else, in the heat of my pursuit, and with all the wrong-headedness of an old bachelor, I will take to myself (and consequently saddle their society with) some Transylvanian or Croatian Countess, with five hundred ancestors in her pedigree, and just as many crowns in her pocket. What she wants in wealth may be made up in pride and presumption; and I may hope that hereafter, when I come to settle among you, her ladyship will revenge the wrongs I have suffered, by keeping the *Gang* in continual hot water; and dashing a little of her vinegar and wormwood into the daily cup of every member of it. But I scorn to strike such a stroke by surprise; and therefore, I give you all a twelvemonth's notice to *cater* for me—or, look to yourselves.

I am glad that Sir George Colebrooke is likely to retire with the small pittance of 180,000*l.* I like moderation in others, and shall one day give an example

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myself, by retiring with somewhat near the same sum, whenever I shall have paid off my score of gratitude to my King and country. Why, my dear Brad, should a man, whose name is recorded with never-dying honour in the "Town and Country Magazine," give himself up to turmoil and trouble, in order to acumulate excessive wealth? Has not my worthy friend, Count Osten, (that sage and inflexible statesman) withdrawn himself from state troubles, and worldly grandeur, and with a *cool three hundred* a year, gone to turn his pen into a ploughshare in the healthy wilds of Jutland? Has not Count Rantzau (that staunch and uncorrupted patriot) fled from those honours which bloomed around his brows, and sought a philosophic retirement in Switzerland? Has not General Koller Banner?—Has not General Eichstadt? * But I am tired of *has nots*, and shall therefore only beg of your lordship, for the sake of moralising, (and for the honour of my penetration,) to cast an eye upon what has passed in the last ten months, in that blessed capital of Copenhagen. Think, my friend, how comfortable I feel in my present mansion, and judge what ought to be my thankfulness to those who chose it for me! You live amongst my friends and patrons—tell them how strongly that sentiment is impressed upon my mind. Yours,

R. M. K.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Tuesday, 13th April, 1773.

EVERY *Brad* in the world is desirous of being employed for *Monsieur le Chevalier*. A most excellent poem, laughing at Sir William Chambers' dissertation on Oriental gardening, has been published. It was

* The leading conspirators in the Danish Revolution—all disgraced and exiled.

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magnificently printed, with many acres of margin, and too large for a letter. I expressed a wish that I could send it to you, and I found it this evening in my study, copied by Mrs. Bradshaw, who only desires in return to be remembered to you in the kindest manner. You do, or you do not remember Sir William's work. After telling you of a great Chinese author who informed him that some plants will grow best in clay, some in sand, some in low ground, some on hills, some in the sun, and some in the shade, with many other recondite truths, he informs you that in the Emperor of China's gardens, for the entertainment of the Emperor and his women, there is a fortified town, with its posts, streets, public squares, temples, markets, shops, and tribunals of justice, in short with every thing that is at Pekin, only on a smaller scale. Some of the eunuchs personate porters; fruits are cried about in the streets of the mock city, and dexterous slaves act the part of thieves, pick-pockets, and sharpers, who are occasionally taken up by the watch, conveyed before the judges, and sometimes severely bastinadoed, which seems to be rather serious for a joke. If you have not read Sir William's dissertation, what I have written of it may throw a light upon Mrs. Bradshaw's present,* which has been more admired than any production of the last season. It is not strange that I should be partial to it, as the author has been so good as to present me with an exalted station upon the *velvet of Richmond lawn*.*

Lord Frederick has written to you. I dined with

* The poem alluded to, (too well known for transcription,) *viz.*, "The Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers," from the pen of Anstey, the author of the Bath Guide, thus concludes :—

> "Be these the rural pleasures that attend
> Great Bradshaw's leisure; these shall best unbend
> His royal mind, whene'er, from state withdrawn,
> He treads the velvet of his Richmond lawn."

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him on Friday, and we drank your health with a warmth and affection that would have disarmed your anger in a trice, if you could have peeped and listened from behind the door. The Drummonds are all well. Bob and Tatty had their *tails singed* last Friday morning. About three o'clock a fire broke out in their kitchen, which, with all the offices out of doors, was burned to the ground. The house was saved, but the family routed, and Tatty made her escape in a great-coat without shoes or stockings. If the governor had not kept the door to the offices shut, the house would have been wholly destroyed. So say the firemen; and we, who are *toad-eaters* to Bob, swear it, to compliment the governor upon his conduct, which must promote him to the direction of the Fire Office.

Notwithstanding the contemptuous manner in which you talk of *Committees*, I will tell you that the *whole House*, (who are for ever told that the eyes of all Europe are on them, and who, if they were as modest as I am, would *all blush* if they believed it,) in a Committee upon Indian affairs, have resolved to lend the East India Company 1,400,000*l.*, to enable them to discharge all claims that will be upon them from this time to Michaelmas 1774, *provided* that this loan be accompanied by such regulations for the future administration of the affairs of the Company, as may prevent their being brought a second time into their present situation. These regulations will keep the Parliament sitting a great part of the summer, and perhaps may possibly find it as *hot* a one as ever they felt in Indostan. You may tell me that you don't care a farthing for all this—may be so; but I will not sit twelve hours in a stinking house and vile company, if I am not to export the importance I derive from it to foreign parts and great ministers! Do not disgust me for the sake of this poor country. What would become of it, or of what use are

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your negotiations, were I to resign or retire to the solitude of Hampton Court Palace?

The City yesterday, in Common Hall assembled (which means a meeting of about an hundred blackguards), voted a remonstrance to the Throne. We are now so used to them, that even Lord Falmouth stands fire like a dragoon horse; and they are as little regarded as one of Burke's speeches. You know, or you do not, that Barré has resigned his commission of Lieut.-Colonel, because the rank of Colonel was given to Morison, the Quarter-Master General. *I* would have given Barré the rank, because this resignation gives him a consequence with his friends which I would have denied him. I gave my opinion to the bloody Barrington, and he is rather sorry he did not take it; but they no more mind Noll Bluff, than if he were not in the land of the living. Adieu, my dear Keith. I have not yet paid you for the china. Some acts of friendship and some of extravagance, have distressed me for some months in money matters; but I am growing a little *fatter* in the purse, and will soon pay my debt. I make you no excuses, as I know your *affluent circumstances* make it a matter of little importance to you. If I were as sure of your friendship I should be perfectly easy.

T. B.

To return to the fire which *un-kitchened* the governor.* The alarm was so sudden and so serious, that when the children were collected, and Tatty wrapped in her great-coat, they retired to Hope and Whately's house, when, having secured their persons, they began to think of their effects. Tatty† sent with much anxiety for a drawer, containing the letters of *one Keith*; and Bob soon after appeared, bringing into the place of safety, not his papers nor his plate, but a fishing-rod and a

* R. Drummond, Esq. † Mrs. Drummond.

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box of his choicest flies. These two circumstances are exactly true. What a fine thing is nationality! The watchman who stands in Spring Gardens is a Scotchman. When he thundered at Bob's door, and brought him to the window, the governor asked him where the fire was? St. Andrew answered, "It is somewhere behind; but I came first to your honour, because you are of my own country."

Lord North has moved a call of the House for the 26th; wisely thinking that the *blue sky* would otherwise call all the country gentlemen home, and that it will not be proper to carry important questions by a small number of place-men. In consequence of his motion, the Speaker, as usual, wrote to the sheriffs to give notice to the members in their several counties, which has brought him an answer from the sheriffs of London and Westminster, that would *formerly* have set the House of Commons on fire. They inform the Speaker that, pursuant to his orders, they have given notice to the members for the cities of London and Westminster, and to Sir John Glyn, and *John Wilkes*, members for the county of Middlesex! We shall put it in our pockets, I dare say, as usual.

T. B.

I am not well, my dear Keith. I am nervous and shabby, and my letter is dull, and smells of my disorder. Adieu: my heart is sound and will be always young.

A thousand thanks for your letter of the 27th March, which I have this moment received. It has done me more good than the whole College could have done me, but I am not in spirits to answer it by this post. I would have sent you Sir Joseph's letter, if I could have supposed you had not the newspapers. Indeed, my dear Keith, I cannot correspond with a man who does not

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read them; and you must have a weekly journal at least, or your ignorance will be beyond all bearing. Parts, learning, I laugh at them all, if your *parts* do not lead you to draw your *learning* from Harry Woodfall, J. Miller, and such respectable authors. If the postage comes to 10*l.* I care not; and you receive with this an account of Sir Joseph's quarrel, and also Lord Townshend's and Lord Bellamont's; for they will bind well together. Adieu; Sir Joseph's letter shall follow as soon as I get it.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

16th April, 1773.

I AM better than I was, my dear Keith, but I still feel the secretaryship of the Treasury, and my nerves are shattered to pieces; but hang grievances, my boys are all at home, and in perfect health, and I will enjoy in them, what I want in myself. Do you know that I have cut you out a little business, for your leisure hours? You are to determine what I shall do with all and each of my four boys. The eldest is a boy of sound parts, the second a very extraordinary boy, with quick and brilliant parts, and I should think would succeed in the law; the other two you know are infants. You see, my dear Keith, that I shall make no ceremony when I have any burden to lay upon your shoulders. If I should die, I will leave you the whole family, as a legacy; and as you are an advocate for a married life, you may take post at the head of a battalion at once.*

Mr. Hart, who being a pretty gentleman, must be a friend of yours, is turned out of the banking-house, and

* Little did the playful writer foresee how soon and literally his prediction would be verified! Within a year, his sudden and unexpected death—leaving his family apparently indifferently provided for—consigned his widow and children to a friendship which it will be seen on the occurrence of the event, realised his warmest anticipations.

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may now accompany the *Count* in his next tour to the Continent. It is very dangerous to have any dealings with *you* foreign ministers, and I am resolved to owe you money no longer.

Suppose I were now to take some notice of your Excellency's modest letter of the 27th March. So! when the natural sweetness and softness of my disposition induces me to make concessions, I am to be rewarded by abuse! and gibbetted with the title of a good sort of man! Why, neither Woodfall nor J. Miller ever treated me so cruelly. Pray, good Mr. Plenipo, don't sink me into a *good sort of a man;* a character that becomes only the deputy of a ward. I had forgot that I was engaged with the prince of negotiators. I should have thought of the brass that adorns the forehead of his Majesty's chosen envoy. By the bye, the man who could bully a King, his ministry, an ambitious mother, and a whole country,* must be a very impudent fellow! and it is not strange that a poor gentle Lord of the Admiralty, whose disposition, as well as his face, is *couleur de crême,* should fall under the practices of such a person. What you say about Basil's appointment brought tears in my eyes, and they were tears of much satisfaction. I don't care whether you approve or not; but I shall show your letter to Lord Dartmouth, as the most certain method of having that part of it reported *in a certain place.*

All the Drummonds supped with me last night, and I did not fail to communicate to them your *kind* remembrance of the whole family. If anger don't make Tatty write to you, your chance must be desperate. Bess, with her usual smile, says you are an impudent dog.

T. B.

* Alluding to Sir R. M. Keith's spirited conduct in Denmark.

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MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

23rd April, 1773.

WEDNESDAY was a day of days. From the most perfect tranquillity that reigned in the Admiralty on Tuesday, we were plunged at once, the next day, into all the preparations for war. You know that the French are preparing a fleet of twelve sail of the line, at Toulon. *You* may also know what they intend to do with this fleet, or you may amuse yourself with forming a thousand brilliant conjectures upon the subject; all this is not my business, who only mean to inform you of facts in my authentic *Gazette*. Fifteen ships of the line were yesterday ordered to be immediately fitted out for sea, to reinforce Sir Peter Dennis in the Mediterranean. The following is the list:—The Barfleur of 90 guns; the Resolution, Egmont, Lennox, Royal Oak, Terrible, Albion, Dublin, Kent, and Torbay, of 74 guns each; the Boyne of 70, and the Worcester, St. Albans, and Somerset, of 64 each. They are to be completed, to the highest complement of men, and the seventy companies of marines are to be augmented twenty men a company. Fifteen more ships of the line will be put into commission, and grim-visaged War seems peeping abroad everywhere; but I hope the fleet will only be one of *observation*. The way to secure peace is certainly to be prepared for war; and I will venture to say, without laying claim to the smallest degree of merit, or wishing to rob Lord Sandwich of any part of the credit he so well deserves, that the navy of the country never was in so effective a state as it is at this present; and that no fleet ever was ready for service so soon after it was ordered, as this will be. Upon second thoughts, I am too modest, and might lay claim to some merit; for—*I signed all the orders.*

I kept my intention, and yesterday showed your letter

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about Basil's appointment, to Lord Dartmouth. He was much pleased with my letter; still more with the one to himself. He respects your father and your Excellency exceedingly; but he is positively *in love* with Basil; and I am ashamed to say, he said more of him than I could have found words to say, though I love him as well, and have known him longer. The Knight is returned in perfect health from Bath, where he went, to break into a succession of Jamaican feasts. He showed me your incomparable letter to him, which I cannot sufficiently admire.

You promised to write to me by the last post, but as the song says, "I find it nothing so." Yet I am patient, and don't mount the great horse, like the laird of Murrayshall, &c. I wish *I* had bullied a Queen, I might then *domineer* like some folks, and be minded as they are. Bob, the governor, bids me ask you whether you have forgot a *certain* business, about which in *certain* cases, you were to write to him in a *certain* manner? So much for my commission, executed in your own way. I hope you understand me, which will be more than I do myself; for my instructions were *secret*, but not *confidential*.

Basil returns to-morrow to Bath. He says, he found the waters had been of use to him; but I don't think he seemed to want them when he left town.

A very melancholy and extraordinary event has happened at the Castle at Salthill. A company of eight persons dined there last Saturday, and were all taken ill that evening. Captain Needham of the Guards (Lord Kilmurray's son), a Mr. Isherwood of Windsor, and a third person whose name I do not know, are already dead; Mr. Mason, a commander in the navy, is dying, and the other four are dangerously ill. They have not yet found out from what cause this unhappy business has proceeded.

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Wednesday.

Two more of the persons whom I mentioned to you above, as having dined at Salthill, are dead. It seems there were some felons removing from Reading Gaol put into a stable at the inn; that the gaol distemper is now in that prison; and the persons who have died, all, from curiosity, or some other motive, went to see these fellows. This I mention, in justice to your friend, Mrs. Partridge, whose wine, or cooking, has been supposed to have poisoned these unfortunate persons.

I send you Wilkes's letter to the Speaker. It is a modest and decent epistle. The House met yesterday. The Speaker informed them of the return he had received from the Sheriffs of Middlesex, and not one word was said! *"Where is the spirit of Onslow, the dead."*

The Speaker has not mentioned Wilkes's letter. Adieu. T. B.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

April 27th.

Poor Campbell, who had a Highland corps with you in Germany, and who, a few weeks ago got the Lieutenant-Governorship of Chelsea Hospital, which he told me put him at the height of all his wishes, is dead. Peace be to his ashes! I once passionately loved his wife; but she took to face-painting, and I was cured. She has a good fortune, and if you want a wife who will be of any complexion you please, I will make your proposals.

Wilkes came yesterday to the House, in consequence of the Sheriff's summons. He was refused to be sworn in the Court of Wards, because the Clerk of the Crown would not give him a certificate of his return for Middlesex. Serjeant Glyn informed the House of his attendance and of the refusal of the Clerk; and he

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moved that Mr. Wilkes might be called in to make his complaint; which motion, after some few absurd speeches upon so absurd a business, was rejected by 227 to 124. A great mob collected about the House, but it was a mob of curiosity, and behaved very quietly.

"Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front." Lord Stormont writes, that on Tuesday last (the day our fleet was ordered for sea), the Duke d'Arguillon informed him that the armament at Toulon was *stopped*, and that they should not *exercise* their fleet at soonest before the end of summer! You know all this officially. I beg pardon for troubling you with any politics of my *cooking*, when you have it in such plenty from a *Cordon Bleu*. However, my coarse fare may give you an appetite for your *secret and confidential* feasts. Yours,

T. B.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

30th April, 1773.

We begin with the Nabobs next week, but I see plainly they will get out of the scrape with the loss of character (which many of them set no value on) and a very small *snip of their tails*. In this country, if a man gets a great deal of money by any means, he is secure of keeping it; and if he will spend it liberally, nobody will consider what he was or how he came by it, while they are eating his meat, drinking his wine, or winning his money. If he is obliged to retrench, his fame is undone, and mankind are so *virtuous*, they will not keep him company.

We have countermanded the orders for commissioning the ships, which were to replace the guard-ships intended for the Mediterranean; but we do not relax in preparing the fifteen ships of the line which I mentioned in a former gazette, till we are sure that our neighbours

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will act according to their declaration; besides, they did not know of our *actual* preparations when the declaration I wrote to you was made to Lord Stormont; they had only been threatened with them. I am told the French Ambassador goes about saying that France will not disarm. A few days will determine all this; in the mean time we are raising men, and I do believe we shall complete the fifteen ships without pressing. When they are all at Portsmouth, I shall go down and pass a few days on board Barrington's ship. Don't you think *that* will exceedingly alarm the French? But you *ministers* never give an opinion but in *cypher*, which is the reason so many of you are *cyphers* yourselves.

And so Sir Basil is grown so fond of *rabbits*, that he is resolved to have a *Warren** of his own! I have found out the reason of his finding so much benefit from the Bath waters; and I have abused him for keeping me so many days deprived of the satisfaction which I always receive when anything good happens to the *Keiths*. She must be a good woman, for she has generosity, which seldom grows in an indifferent soil.

Adieu my dear Chevalier. I am going to the country with Rigby, who desires me to present his kindest compliments to you, and who orders me to finish my letter and mount my horse. *Apropos*, do you ever ride?

T. B.

LORD FREDERICK CAMPBELL TO SIR R. M. KEITH.†

Coombank, April 11th, 1773.

THERE was a time, my dear Keith, when the *Gang* had a great idea of your knowledge, address, and dispatch

* Sir Basil was on the eve of marriage with a lady of that name.

† Lord Frederick Campbell, Lord Registrar for Scotland, and a distinguished member of the *Gang*. This letter, being alluded to both in the previous and subsequent ones, may be properly introduced here.

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in business. Dresden promised something, and the *little* bustle of a Danish Court made us look up to you with astonishment. But this is all over. Sir Basil has formed, undertaken, and executed, a great plan almost in the same instant. The *Gang* think if he were at your elbow, he would be as expeditious in breaking the present Triple League against Poland, as Sir William Temple was formerly in completing the Triple Alliance. He is indeed a great man; so are you, my dear Sir Robert; but at Jamaica the Admiral must take place of the Knight.

True excellence consists in governing well, and a good government is an excellent thing. And then Basil is as generous as if he had never been poor. He has already bestowed a very great pension upon the *Queen of Denmark*;* many thousands are remitting to you, and he has with both hands been dispensing immense treasures to us at *Loo*.

These are fine times; the *Gang* grows rich, and yet the Drummonds are not poor: how astonishing! But they are able to stand the call of half the world. This is a secret Sir George Colebrooke was not in the least acquainted with; but he never dealt in the riches of the heart.

Your last memorial, my dear Keith, is not to be answered. However, as you hold out peace to the worthy silent gentlemen of Charing-cross, I am not without hopes that it is to be extended to all the *contracting parties*: for one, I accept of it on any terms.

We were, indeed, excellent men when setting out upon our travels with one hundred and fifty guineas, with difficulty squeezed from both our patrimonies; but we are still valuable. For my own part, by planting, farming, improving, and building, at Ardincaple, Coombank, and London, I expect soon to return to my pristine

* Alluding to the ridiculous paragraph before quoted.

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value. In the mean time, I wish to enable you to swear to my hand-writing. Lord North has put the empire of Hindostan to nurse for six years, with as much ease as Sir Matthew Lamb used to do the estate of an English peer; with this small difference, however, that the Baronet thought only of himself, Lord North of the public.

As soon as I am reduced to my former poverty, I shall again begin to think of a well-built German post-chaise; nor is that thought perhaps so very distant. At present, behold me at my villa, where every kind of work is going on, but that where *Pam*, instead of Mr. Brown, presides. To-morrow industry will begin; for I expect Harry and his *Tartar* wife (your own expression) will make me a visit. The only business of this little week is to be mirth, jollity, and gambling. When I return to the world the silent gentleman shall open his mouth. This only comes to bespeak peace. Forget and forgive. Love me as I love you, and be assured that I am, dear Keith, yours most truly.

Just a word more. I have a cousin I have some hopes of; he is seventeen, an Ensign in the Guards (Edmonstone by name); he has been one year at Glasgow, three months on parade, and is lately gone to Brunswick for education. What should he do next? Would Vienna be a good school for him some time hence? His father will come down with three hundred, or indeed anything you order, and he will follow out his military education as you direct. You are still in some repute; stroke your chin and advise. Fred* is this instant come in, and scolds me for writing a long letter. "Aye," says I, "but it is to Keith!" "Make it longer; add my love," says her ladyship.

F. C.

* Lady F. Campbell—sometimes elsewhere designated by the familiar epithet of Ferry.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, May 1st, 1773.

I AM sorry, *very sorry*, my dear Brad, that the blockhead whom I sent over on purpose to execute my vengeance upon *Tatty*,* did his business so clumsily. I had charged him *expressly* to set fire to the house, in the room under Tatty's bedchamber, and to be careful that it *kindled kindly*, and communicated to the *nursery*. I had hopes that even the officious puppy of a Scotch watchman in New-street, would only be able to save Bob himself (whom, for the sake of the sport of angling, I was willing to spare), with a very small remnant of his family. They have all of them got off for this once, with only their rumps a little scorched; but (as the ingenious Caleb Whitefoord has it) *if they do not soon put five letters in a certain place*, they shall hear of me.

I *have* friends, and they have shown themselves so *indeed*, by sending me "The Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers." Need I say that I have tasted it with the keenest relish? or that I doat upon Mrs. Bradshaw's condescension in extending the fame of her *gibbetted lord* to the gates of Vienna? I now offer her a *ribboned* successor to that dangling lord-commissioner, whenever Jack Ketch shall have fulfilled *his* duty and *her* wishes. I long to see whether an eight days' suspension amidst the ambient air of Bagshot, may not change the well-known *cream colour* into some darker hue. Your children, whom you now recommend to my counsel, shall then share in my paternal care; and not a Brad of them all shall follow his deceased sire in the page of Woodfall, or heath of Hounslow. But enough of this—next to my Frederick. You gave me a hint of his contrition, which at length vented itself in three

* The amiable lady of Mr. R. Drummond.

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tiny pages of penitential diction. These he intrusted to Sir Basil, who presuming, I suppose, that the wind did not set fair for the eastern coasts of Britain, made a *tack* with them in his pocket to *Bath*, from whence I have received them, and with cordial welcome, as an earnest of better days. His lordship Fred tells me, that Harry and Bess, &c., were to pass the holidays with him in mirth, jollity, and gambling. Happy, happy, happy *Gang!* gay, jocund, artless, and above all, *unfeeling*—the very type of innocence primeval.

Shall I own it to you, my Brad? amidst the present *august* and *Imperial* scenes, where I am wrapt in drowsy dignity, I often paint to my imagination the sports which fill your lordship's leisure, and that of my quondam friends and comrades. This very *first of May* now, I suppose you all returned from Coombank; and perhaps at the instant I am penning this poor page, you and Mrs. Brad, with Tatty, Ferry, Bess, &c., attended by *ten Cicisbeos*, and a score of your *well-fed* children, are rolling in company down Greenwich-hill for the honour of old England! Lord! Lord! and here am *I*, a pompous periwig-pated plenipo, with a vengeance to me! Adieu.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

4th May, 1773.

I TAKE for granted, by your Excellency's silence, that you are tired of receiving my dull gazettes; and your Excellency takes for granted that by your silence you will put an end to them. No such matter, *mon cher Chevalier!* till you say in direct terms, *ground your pen*, I will continue to write.

Lord North yesterday opened his plan of regulations for the East India Company, the outline of which is as follows:—That after the next election, the Directors

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shall hold their places in the direction for four years. That the qualification of those who are in future to vote for directors, shall be altered from 500*l.* stock held for six months, to 1000*l.*, in the possession of the voter for twelve months before the election. That there shall be a Governor-general, assisted by a Council of five, or seven, with superintending powers over all parts of India; in whom alone shall be vested the making of peace and war; and who are to be authorised to suspend, or remove governors, and all other servants of the Company. That judges shall be appointed by the Crown, for the administration of justice in India; and that the Governor-general in Council shall, for the first time, be named by Parliament, and in future, as the directors are chosen, by the proprietors.

The rest of the regulations relate to prohibition of private trade, monopolies, and exorbitant interest. Lord Clive spoke two hours and twenty-five minutes, as a defence; in which time, he uttered many absurdities, and by no means convinced me of his innocence. He gave his opinion of several regulations, and declared, that he thought none more important than the preventing individuals from becoming suddenly and immoderately rich; that he had been obliged to confine power, while he was in India, in a few hands, or, that instead of six or seven nabobs "*of us*," (that was his expression,) there would have been fifty, which would not have been very agreeable to country gentlemen. What think you of this, my dear Keith? It may be great, but it was very impudent, in my poor opinion, who am only *couleur de crême*. Burgoyne moved for taking the several reports from the secret and select committees into consideration on Monday next; when the nabobs will come under investigation, and I hope some of them will be squeezed. Upon reflection, I am inclined to think all this may be very uninteresting to you; but

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you *shall* know whatever passes. We have no orders as yet for disarming; and I shall go on Friday to see the fleet. Upon the return of a messenger from Paris, we shall know more.

5th.

The messenger is returned, and all is peace again. Johnny Parker has got the 20th regiment. I wish your Excellency had it, even if I were by that means prevented from writing to you, by your return to this poor miserable country, to live your life with the *Gang*, instead of the Princes and Princesses with whom you hold your daily fêtes.

Another mail, and no letter! Job was a choleric fellow to me; I will say nothing, but, "*tout Job comme je suis*," I will think of your Excellency as you deserve, and leave your punishment to your own conscience. Adieu.

T. B.

LORD FREDERICK CAMPBELL TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

May 11th, 1773.

You have too much spirit, my dear Keith, and have been too long at the Court of Vienna, easily to receive into your confidence an old friend, who has so long neglected your correspondence. Besides, I am become a mere country gentleman, and know as little as an old Tory did formerly, when he had first found his way to St. James's. Yet I think there is a certain good-nature about you which does you more honour than your red ribbon; and which, after having seen about as many letters from me, as there are usually post-boys before a German dispatch of a victory, will soften your heart to its old feelings, so that the pen will run again in its usual Keith style, and I shall deserve to hear from you.

By the bye, what an escape we have had! War and

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peace—orders and counter-orders to arms for this fortnight past, have taken their turns again and again. At present, the barometer of this part of the world certainly stands at peace. We have this from authority; the first Lord of the Treasury let this out of a budget the other day in the House of Commons, before his brethren of the Cabinet knew it was assured. They were very angry, as it is said, and have since taken most ample revenge of his lordship, by showing, to a very full House, that he must sometimes submit to be governed.

Yesterday, upon notice given, the administration suffered Burgoyne to lead the House to the consideration of the various reports of the secret and select committees, and to call for examples, by way of punishment, or at least restitution. The motions themselves shall follow, as part of my speech, *alias* letter. In the meantime, I will tell you the whimsical turn those propositions took, and the whimsical situation Lord North contrived to put himself into.

The propositions were formed by a secret committee of the select committee, some three or four; as Burgoyne, Sir William Meredith, Sir John Turner, and Vane; but were made public long enough before they were moved. His lordship, as I am told, was well apprised of them, and it was known he meant to support them. His Solicitor-general, equally apprised of them, resolved to give them the strongest opposition; which he did in a long elaborate able speech, full of bitterness against Burgoyne, to whom he was a second Junius. The House was, to a man, almost as determined to abandon these motions, as they had been eager to adopt them. They were allowed by all to be too general, too undefined, and too equivocal to be voted; Burgoyne having particularly chosen the word *State*, as applicable either to the public as sovereigns, or to the Company,

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and professing not to decide the question of territorial right, one way or other.

Lord North gave up the propositions, but defended the substance of them. Dyson said he could not assent to them as proposed, and it was universally agreed they could not be proceeded upon. In this state the House remained, *two or three hours* debating in what manner they should be postponed; for the Solicitor-general had very injudiciously moved for the order of the day, which seemed to carry with it an intention to put an end to any further proceeding whatever, by way of example. Had he only moved to adjourn the debate immediately, the question would have been carried without a moment's hesitation. From dry order, the House got round again to the rapacity, oppressions, robberies, and murders of our English nabobs. The Attorney-general, with all the eagerness of a *Rigby*, and, as if supported by all the warmth and weight of a *Bedford*, rose up, and in a very able, masterly performance, caught the instant, and at once, with redoubled heat, established the motions!

Dyson did now find out that it was possible to assent; Lord North did now find out there was a part of the administration that must be blooded; and he submitted to take their direction, and govern the House more effectually by their passions than ever he had done by his ministerial influence. Nothing that you have read of concerning the effects of ancient oratory, could have given you a stronger idea of the transitions that are to be made in the opinions of a popular assembly, than this scene, had you been present. Yet, it was not oratory, (though that had its weight,) but passions and political feelings that made the fluctuations.

What has been done, is right in substance. But the manner of it will show who are to govern in the Cabinet; and that what was omitted to be done for

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years past through indolence, must now be hastily pursued with violence ;* for to that the House of Commons often have, and will now oftener come, when they make themselves judges.

The *Gang* are not, as you wished them, tied neck and heels, or hanging upon gibbets, but all well.

Yours, most truly,
F. C.

P.S.—PROPOSITIONS OF THE SECRET COMMITTEE UPON INDIAN AFFAIRS.

1. That all acquisitions made under the influence of military force, or by treaty with foreign powers, do of right belong to the *State*.
2. That to appropriate acquisitions so made, to the private emolument of persons intrusted with any civil, or military power of the State, is illegal.
3. That very great sums of money, and other valuable property, have been acquired in Bengal, from Princes, and others of that country, by persons intrusted with the military and civil power of the State; which sums of money and valuable property have been appropriated to the private use of such persons.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, May 8th, 1773.

Sir Basil, the great governor, Sir Basil, has done, (according to the "Bath Journal,") or is about to do—a deed! He is a very honest fellow, (though a *rich man*,) and I expect him to favour the world with half a dozen future admirals and plenipos, bearing the stamp of all the beauty of their sire. If they either have

* It is impossible not to be struck with the applicability of this remark to many important constitutional changes of more modern times.

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money, or care for it; if they are tamely prudent, and wordly wise; or love logic better than nonsense, they are no progeny of Basil's, and I disinherit them by anticipation. Do you, my dear Brad, hold a council of war upon my lady sister, and give me that lawful right to love her cordially, which, from several good anecdotes I know, I am already so much inclined to do. If the *Gang* grant their testimony to her merit, I will not hesitate a moment to settle two or three thousand pounds a year of jointure upon her ladyship, out of my share of the next kingdom which any of the powers of Europe shall think proper to cut into shreds, and parcel out among their friends and adherents, for the improvement of the law of nations. You know every butcher's dog has a slice out of the offal, and what are we *plenipos* but curs of the same kidney?

She, poor woman! has probably taken it into her head, that she is soon to be sister-in-law to one of the greatest, nay, wisest ministers in Christendom. What a falling off, when she comes to hear the truth of the matter, and of the man,—from Bess or Tatty, or some such *viper* or *virago!* Tell them, my Brad, and tell my lady too, that none of them know me; and that if it had not been my misfortune to keep their company, I had it in me to have been as painstaking and profound a politician as Count Haslang, or any other minister of their acquaintance. Nay, you may add for her comfort, that, if my banishment is prolonged for ten or a dozen years, I shall bring home to England, as great a share of wisdom, and of *wig*, as ever graced a son of Hugo Grotius. But enough of this. Her ladyship has naturally turned her thoughts more towards the *negroes* of Jamaica, than the *negotiators* of Europe.

N.B.—In the next *assiento* treaty with Spain, I will have an eye to Basil and his blacks!

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MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

May 14th, 1773.

Now to your letter; but my dear Keith, I am but a frail piece of mortality; I am plagued with nerves and headaches, and I feel that I have not half the mirth and good-humour that I used to possess. If, therefore, you will not accept of a dull matter of fact letter, now and then, tell me so. I will be silent if you desire me; but I *will* love you, in spite of your teeth.

May 18th.

Whiskers,* as well as *Monsieur*, is a little more lively than becomes his natural gravity, or our greatness. But I beg your pardon for touching upon such topics; and drawing in my horns, and shutting up my political budget, I shall only *touch*, and *go*. I am this moment returned with Rigby from a visit to the Attorney-general.† I don't know whether you know much of him; in my opinion he is the first of statesmen. I am sure he is the first man of business I know. He is whetting his tusks for the nabobs. Burgoyne moves that Lord Clive has received 260,000*l.*, and a Jaghire, to the prejudice of the Company; and that he, by so doing, is guilty of a misdemeanour. It will be followed by a resolution for his restoring that trifling sum.

Adieu my dear Keith.

MR. BRADSHAW TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Tuesday, 25th May, 1773.

Now hang me like a dog if I don't write you an account of the inquiry into the conduct of Lord Clive, notwithstanding your impertinent sarcasm about *Indian politics* and *roasted Directors*. Nay, don't turn up your plenipotentian snub-nose. You may throw my letter

* The King of Spain. † Thurlow.

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into the fire, or send it, wrapped about half-a-dozen lozenges, to the Princess Lamberg; but the Acts of the Commons of Great Britain *shall* travel to the walls of Vienna by some other conveyance besides Woodfall's *Fly* and J. Miller's *Tim-whisky!*

On Friday last, after examining a witness to some of the facts relative to Lord Clive, which were stated in the report of the Select Committee, Colonel Burgoyne moved, "That it appears to this House, that Robert Lord Clive, about the time of deposing Surajah Doulah, Nabob of Bengal, and establishing Meer Jaffier on the Musnud, did, through the influence of the powers with which he was intrusted, as a member of the Select Committee and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, obtain and possess himself of two lacks and 30,000 rupees, as member of the Select Committee, of a like sum as Commander-in-Chief, a further sum of sixteen lacks or more, under the denomination of private donation; which sums, amounting together to 20 lacks, 30,000 rupees, were of the value of 234,000*l.*; and that in so doing, Robert Lord Clive abused the powers with which he was intrusted, to the evil example of the servants of the Company."

Mr. Stanley moved to divide the question, and that the censure, from the figures 234,000*l.* should be left out. After debate this was agreed to, Lord North being for it. Rose Fuller then moved to amend the first question, then to be put, by leaving out, "*through the influence of the powers with which he was intrusted,*" which occasioned a very long and warm debate till past five o'clock on Saturday morning, when, upon a division, 155 were for Fuller's amendment, and 95 against leaving out the above words, in which last number was your humble servant, who was beat, with his general, Lord North; but, upon my word, I voted from conscience and feeling. I would not have taken a shilling from

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Lord Clive, but I would have established the principle; and avowed, that in consideration of Lord Clive's great and eminent services, the House would proceed no farther in his case. It was no ministerial question. Lord North did not call for the support of any one friend. He was opposed by his warmest partisans, and supported by many of his keenest enemies.

Upon the whole I felt a pleasure in the good-humour of John Bull. He will speak and write daggers, and hang and cut off heads without mercy in the newspapers; but when a culprit has submitted, and John has him absolutely in his power, he will not hurt a hair of his head. Having done justice to John's temper, I must add, that I see very serious consequences from the effects of it upon the present occasion. Without pursuing a very strict and serious inquiry into the causes of the present wretched and bankrupt condition of the Company, and making an example of some of those, at least, whose rapine and villainy have brought it to the brink of destruction, all laws will be a joke, and regulations will be waste paper. It is intended to go on with the inquiry, and to punish some of the *untitled* plunderers of the East by making them *disgorge*. Now I own, though these minor plunderers have not Lord Clive's services to plead, yet when they say in their defence, that what they received by holding a pistol to some distressed nabob's head, and making him give them a *voluntary present* (for they are all stated as voluntary), they were encouraged to take from the example of Lord Clive, and the honours which were afterwards conferred upon him (for the scene of rapine has been, since the revolution, in favour of Meer Jaffier) —and when they plead the precedent of the House, established last Saturday, and the arguments used by respectable members in support of such presents, I own I shall bring myself with difficulty to squeeze even a

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Sykes. As my mind goes to equal and impartial justice, though I have been Secretary to the Treasury, and am still a member of Parliament, I shall in all probability vote with Lord North, but I shall do it with remorse. If the House had established the offence in the case of Lord Clive, I should have been satisfied, and his services would then have been a sufficient ground for pardoning what had been declared a fault.

Lord Clive said but little in his defence. He threw himself upon the candour of the House; and just before he retired, with tears in his eyes, he implored the House to save his reputation and take his fortune. In short, he acted his part so well, that several members burst into tears; and I am only surprised that the King was not addressed to bestow some additional honour upon him. The principal article of merit insisted upon by his friends was, that when he entered Muxadabat with Meer Jaffier, at the time of the revolution, he did not plunder that city, by which he might have obtained to himself some millions. He had, in that particular, exactly the same degree of merit which King William had, by not plundering London when he took possession of Whitehall with his Dutch Guards. Lord Clive entered Muxadabat in procession, with the new Nabob, his friend, whose city it was, and to whom belonged the treasures it contained; and I do not believe Jonathan Wild would have acted otherwise.

Barré drew an excellent picture of the increase of nabobs, and of their power, as well as of the additional strength which ministers would derive in Parliament from men who must fly to government for protection. He told the country gentlemen that their consequence would be at an end; that the Minister would not even think it worth his while to solicit their attendance. It would not be necessary for him to summon the *national* troops, as he would be able to beat opposition with his *Sepoys*.

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Thus have I tried your patience, my dear Keith, with a long and dull account of what I think an important matter. I should think it relates to a business upon which the eyes of all Europe have been turned (to use Lord Hardwicke's favourite expression), and therefore I was resolved you should know the proceedings in detail. Now to your letter of the 8th of May, which arrived to indemnify me from the disagreeable night which has been the subject of this long dispatch. You write better without a subject than with one, and I had rather have one line of *Keith, unadulterated,* than a volume of the acts of all the Kings of Europe, or the events of all their kingdoms. I therefore desire that all the bricks you send me may be made *without straw.*

Your generosity to Lady Keith does you great honour; I am in love with her already for the whole of her conduct to Basil, and he has shown me a letter from her, which has added fuel to my flame. I long to see her. Bess knows her perfectly well, and is warm in her commendations. When she appears among us, I will promise you a letter from the whole *Gang* upon her subject, and those who cannot write shall make their mark.

Nothing decisive from abroad. Our fleet rides proudly at Spithead, and, to my joy, the King will certainly go and see it after the birth-day.

28th May.

Monsieur has really disarmed, and we are going to pay off our supernumerary men. In the meantime, twenty sail of the line are assembling at Portsmouth, to be formed into three squadrons, that the red, blue, and white flags may fly when his Majesty sees his fleet, which he will certainly do about the 20th of next month; and the summer fleet will sail while he is at Portsmouth.

All the *Gang* are in perfect health. I have neither

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matters of fact nor nonsense to bestow upon you, and with more than common stupidity, and with my usual truth and affection, I declare myself,

Ever yours,

T. B.

Rigby gave Basil a dinner yesterday. He sneaked away early to his *Warren!*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, May 13th, 1773.

I OFTEN find you arrogating to yourself the title of an *exceedingly dull fellow*, and I see you grow proud upon that species of super-eminence; but I would have you know that his Majesty's diplomatical servants deal as largely in that way as any set of men whatever. For instance, I myself at this moment have the intimate feeling of a dulness which would do honour to any cheesemonger in Thames Street, and am heartily disposed to pour a certain quantity of that dulness through the *funnel* of this letter. It shall be the *melted lead* of matter-of-fact, which is known to be particularly ponderous and soporific.

First, then, my new *hotel* has precisely thirty-four rooms, besides passages and entries. These rooms I intend to furnish handsomely, with my two dozen and a half of chairs (ten of which you know have damask bottoms), one settee, six *tabourets*, and three card-tables! Well, sir! I have stabling for sixteen stout saddle and coach horses, and stout ones they shall be! and three of them (my stalls) are already actually filled with *live* horses, my own property. I have but three kitchens, and two ice-houses, and yet I defy any man to guess *which* is *which*, for ice or fire *have I none!* My officers of the household, steward, butler, confectioner, cooks, and four valets-de-chambre, are men at the top of the

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fashion, and dress according to the *four* seasons of the year. My running and walking varlets wear, in their red and yellow doublets of *Denmark*, a variety of wretchedness. I have heard say that these gentlemen and serving-men of my retinue *do dine*, but where, or how, is no *matter of mine*. Thus you see how a foreign minister is undone, by the three deadly drains of furniture, equipage, and hospitality.

May 14*th*.

I am in possession of your letter of the 30th April, and laugh at your French ambassador's *bravados*, knowing as I do that *you* have been at Mistley to settle the national politics with Rigby, and that your lordship will soon wield the Trident of Neptune, on board Barrington's ship.

If Monsieur de Guisnes * is the man of parts I take him for, and has discovered the extent and weight of your talents as a financier, an admiral, a leader of the Commons, *et un homme à bonnes fortunes*, he will serve his Court ill if he does not *Barillon* Bradshaw,† and transmit your name in *golden* letters to grace the page of some future historian.

You ask me if I ever ride? Yes, your lordship, I do ride, and gallop too, without touching the mane. One of my three horses has a switch tail, and shall carry a sportsman with any horse in your palace of Hampton Court. He is of the right Transylvanian breed, and his sire was killed under Count Khevenhuller, at the battle of Krotzka. There, my lord, there's a clear answer to your question.

Sir Basil is by this time deep in the Hybla of the honeymoon, and I cannot help envying him. I have already given you my sentiments upon this sub-

* The French ambassador.

† Alluding to the briberies at the Court of Charles II.

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ject; and if you will be good enough to read in some polite circle the first part of this letter, *descriptive of my housekeeping*, it is not impossible that some amiable creature might be tempted to wish herself at the head of it.

As to politics, I don't trouble my head much with the *quips modest* and *retorts courteous* which are passing between you and your neighbours the Gauls; these I leave to greater men, and my eye of wisdom is turned towards the *Seven Towers of Byzantium*; I mistake much if you, my lord, do not perceive the French *cloven foot*, in the Turkish *manifest-toe* we transmit to your Excellencies by this post.

May 15th.

You shall now have (and indeed it is high time), a little bit of common sense and sound reason tacked to all the preceding fustian and balderdash. You do me honour by consulting me about your boys, and I look with pleasure to the hope of being able to repay by the kindest attention towards them, some part of the debt of friendship which I owe to their father and mother.

The question with regard to the eldest is not how to enable him to create a fortune, but to give him (which is ten times harder to do) the means of enjoying opulence with utility and dignity. I need not remark to you, that a solid and well-founded education is (after health) the first of all blessings in every station; but I am fully of opinion that a man whose fortune is already made, stands more in need of a fund of knowledge, and *self-occupation*, than one of any other class whatever. Open therefore the door of *every science* and accomplishment to your eldest boy, and when you see him step in with pleasure, then make his residence as comfortable and beneficial to him as you can. Should his genius lead him to any grave study which demands a length of application, I do not think you ought to check him in

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the pursuit, though you may not intend he should follow the profession hereafter. The habit of application is in *itself* a treasure, no matter of how little advantage to fortune that branch of knowledge may be which is the object of it. Such a habit may save your boy from the dreadful danger of the times, that of coming into the world too early, with, alas! no other time-killer than *cards* and—*Newmarket*.

I myself am certainly one of the happiest of mortals, and I thank God, I feel it. But if I were to be asked which is my surest fence against the frowns of fortune, or the miseries of *ennui*, which so often follow her smiles, I should answer without hesitation, *my love of books*, and that love you must early instil into your son and heir. Tell me what he likes best to do when nobody controls him, and hint to me the foibles which you have been able to discover in his temper and character, and you shall have my best advice upon everything. A flashy bit of a letter like this, with a few wise sentences and nostrums, will neither fulfil your intentions nor mine; but I will willingly follow the matter out, step by step, which is the only way of doing education *business*. I like the private tutor, and the company of Bob's son exceedingly, *for the present;* and here we will leave him, and proceed to Master Barrington. I think that same young dog, with sharp and brilliant parts, must, and shall be, a lawyer; because that profession is in Britain, and in Britain only, the profession of an honest man, as well as the road to honour and affluence. Let him *Harrow* on at his school for some time longer, but it will not be amiss, in your conversation with him, to endeavour to fix his eye and his ambition early upon the Lord Chancellor's wig. It is fair in a father to give to the *sapling* that gentle twist which bends him towards the paternal wishes for his good.

All degrees of force carried beyond that point, and in

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opposition to natural talents and disposition, are not only cruel, but *absurd*. We will take care of the other brats as they grow up, and as I think I have proved to you that I am fond of boys, I am proud to tell you, Mr. Brad, that you are not the only father who has promised to leave me a legacy of all his children. More than one honest man has made me the honourable offer, and, hang me like a dog, if I don't accept of such legacies whenever they may fall to me, with a tender gratitude, and the sincerest intention of acting up to the duties which they may bring along with them.

Heigh-ho! I have talked reason now for upwards of ten minutes, which is an exercise of the mind I have been little accustomed to, and it jades me prodigiously! My daily pastimes are gallantry and politics; and it is no hard matter to sputter about one or other of those topics for a dozen hours, without the smallest mental fatigue. Every fool is fluent with the ladies; and as to the *jargon* of politics, I verily believe that if you were to sit down at my bed-side at three o'clock in the morning, and put a question to me in regard to the *Pragmatic Sanction*, I should be able to run on (like an alarum clock), for an hour or two, with the rumbling nonsense which belongs to the subject, and never lose a single instant of my seven hours' sleep. I warrant now, my Brad, you could (from a parity of practice) fit out a royal fleet in your first slumber!

So—you have been down with Rigby, have ye? and you have had the mutton hash, and the Harwich soles, and the neck of venison, and the asparagus, and green peas, with a little *Hock and Spa*, and half a glass of champagne, and a pint of the old claret? Oh! Brad, Brad, if you did but know what a fortunate puppy you are, and what a mint of money the Danish knight would have given to share those blessings which (ten to one) you received with a lordly apathy and

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indifference! I don't know how it is, Brad, but I am not sure if you possess the talent of *enjoyment*. I sometimes doubt whether Providence has granted you that best balsam of life. I truly have not had many of the hey-day enjoyments within my reach, but such as have fallen to me I have feasted upon with all the poignancy of appetite. You know that I do not mean aldermanic guzzling of meat and drink; but (as my learned friend Macpherson has it) the feast of souls. I shall grow monstrously hungry for Rigby cookery in that style in a year or two; for, to say the truth, I cannot bring my stomach to relish my present *soupe maigre* and water-gruel diet. When you meet with the matadores of the Ministry, such as Lords North, Suffolk, Dartmouth, &c., you may assure them that, as men who have helped to make my fortune, I respect and honour them; and as men whose friendship makes fortune worth the having, I love them, and wish to live with them. Farewell, my dear Brad. *La belle des belles se porte divinement bien.*

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, May 22nd, 1773.

My dear Lord Commissioner, let me return you the thanks of all the Protestant Princes of the empire, for the speedy and manly exertion of your naval force, which you have so lately exhibited at Spithead. It does not become a pitiful plenipo to guess upon whom you intended to bestow the blows you were so active in preparing; but the alacrity with which your lordship stripped into your buff may have nearly the same effect upon your *unknown antagonists*, as a sound beating would have had. The generality of spectators heartily wish that it may; and we peace-mongers (helping your lordship on with your clothes again) cannot help

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applauding the vigour of the measure, and the moderation which put a stop to it. Thus, my boy, you may now drink a pot with your comrades; and say, that though you love quiet and good fellowship, yet you scorn to refuse to take a *bout* for *love* with any choleric *He* in Christendom.

You are not in earnest, Master Brad, when you talk of curtailing your gazette about St. Stephen's and Leadenhall Street, and the giants of Guildhall. I *must* and *will* know every laudable or laughable anecdote which occurs within the walls of the metropolis and its suburbs; else I will let the Turks take Girgeoff—Ali-beg, Grand Cairo,—and the Russians the whole Archipelago,—without writing a word of the matter. I know you are a great Admiral, friend Bradshaw, but doubt whether your talents as a politician have led you to consider of what importance it is to the welfare of Europe that his Majesty's ministers in foreign parts should be kept in good humour.

Suppose now, (for I love examples), suppose now, I say, that you let a fortnight pass without letting me know what became of Lady Craven. At the end of it I am naturally in a d—d bad humour; and behold, I receive a letter from his Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, telling me that Kara Osmin Oglu threatens to return, and lay the city of Smyrna in ruins. In justice (do you see?) I ought to write to certain parties to avert the danger, and protect the property of his Majesty's subjects; but being angry with you, and peevish with mankind, I say to myself, "D— Kara Osmin Oglu, with Aleppo and Smyrna into the bargain. Since men in power treat me so scurvily in matters of *crim. con.*, I wish I may be hanged if I trouble myself about their paltry matters of commerce." Thus you see that the Turkey Company may be ruined by your silence, and it is not impossible that it might make a great odds

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too in the affairs of Sweden. Every thing in this world is subject to *concatenation*; excepting only my letters, which have not two links that are fellows.

What the deuce will you men of the Ministry do with that same petition from Leadenhall-street, in which you are *humbly* given to understand that you are a parcel of *arbitrary* plunderers? Why, to be sure, the rigid stoicism of Calcutta gives the Directors a right to split a hair in points of property; and it is plain that they will let none but their own nabobs pigeon them with impunity. Lord Clive's idea about the three heads upon Temple-bar is lively and good-humoured at least; but I long to see, by the rest of his defence, how far he is entitled to be a joker upon the subject.

So you think, I warrant you, that I don't know that you have been down at Portsmouth with a *Quint Major* of ministers. Let me know, not how your ships worked, nor their draught of water, but in what spirits these matadores were upon their jaunt, and what share of claret they took in his Majesty's floating summer-houses. If it was half as hot with you, as we have it here, their Excellencies and your lordship must needs have been *bloody thirsty*. Adieu, my Brad.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, May 28th, 1773.

You are now enlisted for life, my dear Brad, and *pleased* or *peevish* you must scribble to me in *sæcula seculorum*. But I positively bar all nerves and head-aches; for God and Nature gave you both a sound constitution and good spirits; and it does not follow that because you are a great man you must be a vapourish valetudinarian. Shall I never see power, health, and

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genuine pleasantry joined in the composition of one happy mortal? Hang Lord Suffolk, and Rigby, and Rochford, and half-a-dozen more of my chosen men, who be-devil half their enjoyments and mine, with gout and gravel, and all those *ills which ministerial flesh is heir to*. Here am I now, possessed (I will be bold to say), of as complete a set of friends as any man in England, yet I should be hard put to it to warrant any one of them sound in wind and limb, except my limber Lord Register,* and the gallant Corporal Harry.† By the bye, Frederick boasts much of his punctuality, for he talks of three letters, and I have had but two, and scraggy ones they were. I am sorry for poor Wedderburn,‡ and I wish the Nabob of Broach at Old Nick, with his feats and his forces. It is a cursed thing to go to be roasted for three or four years in quest of gold or glory, and then to be forked off with an ounce of lead through one's pericranium. The East India business, between Ministry and Direction, is carried on in the lady-like spirit of altercation. The plot thickens beyond my penetration. You ministers want to give them both law and money; the mixture is new to them, and turns their stomachs. But can they contrive to swallow the gilding without the pill? Pray inform me; and whether you continue to prescribe an emetic to the warriors of Plassy? So your worship is pleased to hint that the perfidious *foe* is again returned to his dog tricks, and that honest John Bull must not desist from watching him. Be it so; but certain it is that John Bull is a very well-conditioned responsible housekeeper; and if he must set his family afloat again, I hope the first and best man of that family § will indulge himself with a sight of the show.

Yours, R. M. K.

* Lord F. Campbell.
† H. Drummond, Esq.
‡ Col. Wedderburn, killed in India.
§ The King.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, June 5th, 1773.

I AM now pretty well convinced that some ingenious postmaster instructs his daughter in the art of letter-writing, by examples drawn from our correspondence. What is to be done, my dear Brad? I have lost my money at whist, to Count Paar, the Imperial Postmaster-general; I have made three bows extraordinary, and given two pinches of snuff to the Prince de la Tour Taxis, the Postmaster of the Holy Roman Empire. It is not in the power of man to form a more tender connexion with those princely personages. Yet are our letters purloined in part; for I can no longer doubt of the loss of my manuscript of April 17th, nor stifle my anxiety on your silence of last post. Pray make all safe on your side of the water, by redoubling your kindness and attention to Lord Despenser and Harry Thynne; and I shall be bound that if my valuable friend, Mr. Todd, takes a peep into our papers (as peep he will sometimes), he has too much taste, as well as liberality of sentiment, to suppress a syllable of our cordial confabulations.

I have had your scrawl of May 18th, informing me of the marriage of Ensign Horneck,* to which I give my full consent, looking upon it as a happy omen for the Knight of Denmark. Don't you recollect that Master Horneck was Sir Basil's squire, and that Sir Basil was Sir Robert's proxy at the installation? Mark, now, what has befallen these two gentlemen, and judge whether they are not again walking in procession before him, to guide his steps in the mysterious path of matrimony. Upon the promise you have given me to assemble a *committee* (*secret* or *select*, as you please), I have

* To the beautiful Miss Keppel, daughter to Lord Albemarle.

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suspended all my matrimonial negociations in Transylvania, Croatia, Podolia, and Volhynia, as well as in Moldavia and Wallachia. The news of my purpose had reached those provinces, and many a fair face was washed upon the occasion, which no other waters than those of *baptism* had ever touched before! I may, perhaps, from an exertion of patriotic spirit, resist for a month or two more the overtures of these magnates and their misses; but I cannot, in conscience, stay the progress of population in so many provinces, or keep in suspense such crowds of females, for my single person.

I see that Burgoyne has moved for a large slice of the Jaghire; but pray, can you gentlemen of St. Stephen's enforce a restitution without the form of *legal process?* I do not ask this question from any retrospection towards self; for, though I have touched a pretty round sum of public money and (heaven knows) made but a scanty return for it, yet I boldly defy all the Burgoynes in Britain, to force me to refund a shilling, as I have the happiness to find myself not worth a groat. A few nick-nacks and silver spoons, and so-forth; but there's no buckler against violence and envy like pristine poverty, and that buckler I do wear.

N.B.—I do great justice to Burgoyne's honour and spirit.

O dear! O dear! undone, ruined, past redemption! Who d' ye think is come to Vienna? Why the Duchess of Gordon; and I must feast, and gallant, and present her grace—oh! poor Plenipo! The pen drops from my hand, I can no more.

R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Duke-street, Westminster, June 11th, 1773.

It will be a long time, my dear Keith, before this letter reaches you; but written it must be. A messenger,

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whatever route he takes, can never be sent by me to the place of your residence, while I have a hand to write, without bearing some characters of it; were it only to tell you what you know already, that I honour and esteem you, and am anxious for your prosperity in all respects.

In good truth our domestic scenes don't afford much matter, or such, at least, as I choose to work up; for parliamentary business is sadly out of season in the month of June; and if the occupations of our senators were divine in nature, I should think them diabolical at this time of the year. I hope, however, all our trouble of this sort will be ended in the course of next week, and the ensuing is devoted to the sea. The King makes an expedition to Portsmouth to view his fleet, and visit the great magazine of the first naval power in the world. Suppress if you can, my dear Keith, the emotions we shall feel at this display of national strength and proud pre-eminence, our royal master being an eye-witness of it.

> ——— tua Nautæ
> Numina sola colant; tibi serviat ultima Thule;
> Teque sibi generum Tethys emat omnibus undis!

Vienna is a long way off, and yet I am much mistaken if the fire won't catch, and your imagination transport you on board the *Barfleur!* At all events, drop a blessing on the scheme, and pray that it may be the introduction to other measures of a like nature, which may make our Sovereign better known to his subjects, and build a throne for him in the hearts of his people.

The Governor of Jamaica is setting out to take leave of the old gentleman in Scotland, who, I have the satisfaction to hear, continues perfectly well. So is Bagot, so is Harley, so are the Drummonds. Bradshaw, I believe, speaks for himself. But of my own health I can say little. I am just recovering a cruel

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attack of the gout, and know not how to flatter myself that I shall long be fit for anything.

That you may long, very long, enjoy every blessing that falls to the lot of poor human nature, is the sincere wish of

Your affectionate, faithful, and
Obedient servant,
SUFFOLK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, June 10th, 1773.

THANKS to you, my friend, for your substantial favour of May 25th, which has wiped away from before my weak optics that mist of uncertainty which hung over India and her nabobs. I now see—but what signifies it what I see? Your lordship's eagle eye has marked and seized the prey; and having helped to enrich old England by the restitution of plundered millions, I take it for granted that you have dismissed the Westminster boys for six months at least, and are now preparing to undertake your annual *fidgetation* round all the bathing and water-drinking places in the kingdom. Well! but I hope you will take another cup of Britannia's brine at Spithead (and in the *suite* of the monarch too), before you proceed upon your tour. Lord, what a fine sight! I have a notion that a King of England, upon the quarter-deck of a first-rate, and surrounded by a score of other capital ships, may feel a sort of self-importance and satisfaction, little short of that which I remarked in the countenance of the *late* King of Poland, when he saw ten camels, fifty horses, and fourscore Italians, assembled upon the stage of his Opera House at Dresden. To be sure, both are grand things; but every man has his taste, and mine at present is all tar and turpentine. Huzza! huzza! Sir Charles Saunders against Mademoiselle Heinzel, all the world to nothing!

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June 12*th.*

I told you in my last that I had just got a Duchess *astride* upon my shoulders, who intended to amble me about the streets of Vienna for one painful fortnight at least. Now, in so saying, I did a manifest injustice to her Grace of Gordon, who is certainly one of the *best conditioned,* as well as plainest, of God's Duchesses. She has behaved like a Cherubim for this week past. She has preserved an incognito becoming her face and the fashion. She has seen all my shows (including the bear-garden), with a good-humoured curiosity. She has ate my mutton with a hearty stomach, and said civil things of Sir Robert and his cook, and to sum up all in one word, she leaves Austria on Tuesday next. I swear I am almost sorry for it, for I would sell my coat to serve a woman who is always pleased, always ready, and whose warmth of heart has lighted up a constant glow on her countenance.

I am afraid that Frederick and Dick Cox are again troubled with their old taciturnity. They look upon my letters as "pills to purge melancholy." I wish they were as effectual in removing laziness! Tatty has given me totally up, and yet she thinks of going to Heaven! I am sure of one thing, she must and *shall* make a good long stop in Purgatory; and there her punishment shall be to teach *dull children* to write and spell; and their *copies* shall be taken from those very letters of mine, with which she has made matches in this wicked world. I am undoubtedly a very saint in point of temper, for there are at this moment thirteen or fourteen men and women of your acquaintance in my black book for their neglect of every duty of friendship; and though I could send them all to Tyburn in a moment of wrath, yet I don't know how it is, in the very next, I take them to my bosom and fondle and cherish them as if (like drowned bodies) I could renew

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their heat and circulation by contact with mine. In other words I am a very silly fellow, and a dupe to you all; and if ever I have a son, I will breed him to be cold-hearted and callous *upon principle.*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, June 26th, 1773.

I HEREBY declare my hearty wish that there were not a newspaper in England! for though I am thoroughly convinced of the falsity, as well as the absurdity of their political intelligence; yet, when all my trusty *chums* are pleased to take a *nap* for a *month together,* these cursed newspapers acquire a slight degree of credit in my imagination, which puzzles and plagues me. Your lordship has lived too long in courts and levées not to know that even a barefaced lie stands upon its legs till contradicted; and, if it travels a thousand miles, it has a chance of being taken for Holy Writ. I have had no less than *five* new ministries last week from the Whitehall and St. James's "Evening Post," and notwithstanding that there is not a shadow of *verisimility* (this is a handsome new word for you!) in either of them, yet we Austrians may be forgiven, if we at last open our throats to swallow some of that nonsense so repeatedly thrust within them. You may laugh at me as you please; but if it is ever your fate to be transported (as I trust in the justice of the law of England that it will), I'll lay my life that after a single year's residence in South Carolina,* you will believe a newspaper implicitly, if it should peremptorily inform you, that Tom Grosvenor is made a Rear-admiral, and Dick Cox, Lord Chancellor of England.

Tell me honestly! Do you think I shall ever dwindle

* The *then* Botany Bay of Great Britain.

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into that sort of licensed gazetteer, who furnishes a sixpenny touch of foreign politics once a week for the information of his Majesty's *minor* servants? Hang me like a dog if I would not rather carry mud to the brick-makers in Marylebone-fields; and if ever you perceive that curse coming upon me, pray be frank enough to hint it to me, that I may run away from my paltry pen and ink, and take to the *road*, as other honest gentlemen of *my cloth* have done before me.

I saw with infinite satisfaction, in one of my news-papers, your lordship's speech in the Cabinet council, *for*—and *against*, the propriety of a late naval armament, and I own I never saw anything more forcible and conclusive. Your lordship *can* speak—and all the world knows it. Would that you could *write* with equal fluency! Against common sense, as well as common justice, I nevertheless, am yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, July 10th, 1773.

I HAVE, for this hour past, steeped my pen in milk and honey, in order to wash away the gall which naturally flowed to its nib. I have said to myself, that after living so much in the world, and so long, as an inferior limb of the ministry, it would be absurd in me to complain or fret at the suspension of those gratuitous favours, which a person in high office had for some time past been pleased to confer upon me. In short, I have so far subdued the uncourtly frankness of my natural temper, as to be able to ask your lordship with all the meekness of a pliable politician, when it may be permitted me to hope for the sequel of that instructive correspondence which you had the goodness to promise me in your last *flying favour* of the 1st of June?

I can partly guess at the nature of those weighty

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occupations which have engrossed a considerable share of the intermediate time. But I cannot suppose that a man of your activity and experience in maritime affairs, should be so far taken up by the equipment of a small squadron of twenty ships, and the arrangement of three days' etiquette, as not to have found in a whole month, one moment to throw out a signal of affection to a longing friend in a distant and dangerous offing. I leave it to your conscience to decide, whether my expectation upon that head, had done too much honour to your naval abilities, or to your feelings as a friend; for I humbly conceive that in one or other of these qualities your lordship has fallen short of my partial conception.

I shall learn from Messieurs Miller and Baldwin, the detail of your brilliant operations at Spithead, but shall be happy to hear from you that they succeeded completely to the satisfaction of the Sovereign of the Ocean, and the hearts of oak, his sailing servants. I wish that half a dozen Bourbons had been present at the show, which would hardly have suffered by comparison with the Dauphiness' entry into Paris. But enough of sea affairs; we landsmen are apt to talk nonsense when we talk upon them. Bess and Harry I hear were with you. Did they mount upon the main-yard of a man-of-war to huzza their loyalty? I hope they did; and I wish you had carried down Dick Cox and Lord Fred along with you, and *keel-hauled* them both for their cruelty to me! It might have cured their laziness, which I fear no remedy of mine can accomplish.

Sir Basil is now turned off; let me know how he behaved at the matrimonial tree. If any man could be trusted to tell the truth upon matrimonial affairs, I should in a month or two hence ask his counsel upon the gain and loss of that sort of venture. But I have remarked, from my infancy, that married persons, (like

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Popish nuns) take a pleasure in inveigling the young and unwary to put on the very fetters which perhaps gall *them* in the tenderest part. It must always, I fear, be a leap in the dark, and then—let the hardest fend off. Adieu, dear Brad. Yours,

R. M. K.

LORD FREDERICK CAMPBELL TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Coombank, July 11th, 1773.

Go on, my dear Keith—abuse me behind my back, to my face, how you please: I forgive you all; your mind will work itself clear at last, and I shall turn out injured innocence. You allow me no merit for all the gazettes by authority communicated by a certain great man, high in office; nor for the permission I have given to that great man to send you all the private anecdotes of the Court. You forget that your old friend who lived at the corner of No-street, is one of his Majesty's most honourable privy council; and who, though he knows the hinge upon which everything great turns, dares not directly communicate the secret, even to Majesty's representative at Vienna. Well, but did you really attribute all the intelligence you have received under the signature of T— B— to a poor simple Lord of the Admiralty? God help you! I am afraid his Majesty's affairs will go on in a strange way under such a minister. However, though you do not deserve it, for old acquaintance sake I shall continue to suffer Brad, week after week, to send you an account of all public transactions, and whenever the weight of public business will allow me, I shall myself refresh you with a little of what is going on in private.

While his Majesty was reviewing his fleet, feeling himself really a King, and making all Europe see that he really knew what he was about, I was permitted,

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though very well acquainted with naval affairs, to retire to the Isle of Wight; where, with a great many Amhersts, a great many Drummonds, fine weather, and a beautiful country—Frederick* and I looked down upon our great King in all his greatness. We were once going to contemplate; had an eye to Solomon; and were very near being very wise; but all this ended in our being extremely happy for near a fortnight together, which was a much better thing.

We old fellows wear well. Pray what is your Excellency about? Are you deep in the ancient nobility of Europe? As his Majesty's affairs are always heavy upon my shoulders, I conclude you suppose me now labouring in the North, with not a moment to myself. But you are mistaken: I am enjoying the finest summer that I ever knew in the most beautiful villa that you ever saw, and I am resolved to remain in this retreat a fortnight. Great men like me cannot always drudge on in business; your Excellency indeed may be indefatigable. How you are laughing now at my greatness! If I were sure of this, I would torture you to death by telling you how much profit I made by my sheep last year; what I expect this; not to say a word of the uncommon crop I have on the ground, and that I have now forage enough for a small Prussian army, though only in the middle of my hay harvest. Secrets will out—and you ministers constantly continue to get hold of them. Upon the whole, you will find that all my greatness consists in taking care of my own affairs; no very easy administration either. But I have known harder times, and so have you, my dear Keith; but the world is now fairly before us. By the bye, I have a most agreeable part of it here at this instant, though not in such a good way as I could wish. The Sebrights are thus far on their road to Tunbridge; he is much

* Lady F. Campbell, so designated throughout the correspondence.

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better, and really seems to be getting well. His nerves are strangely shattered, though there is no saying with what; yet I think he will be a man again, and soon, and most sincerely do I wish it. His wife and he are most excellent creatures.

I have been told that your Excellency is very hospitable, and extremely attentive to all his Majesty's subjects who visit Vienna; that you hunt them out, and do every act of civility. If they are old you comfort them, if they are young you encourage them. In case you meet with a young Mr. Sheldon, who is resolved to pick up what he can at Vienna, and to whom your kindness and civility will, I *know*, extend—give me a little merit as to recommendation. His father is a very good Oxfordshire candlestick, drinks a bottle with Forrester and me, and thinks I have *great weight with you*.

Yours most truly,

F. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, July 21*st*, 1773.

THIS comes to say, Mr. Thomas Bradshaw, that you are forgiven in consideration of your wounds in the service,* though there can be no reason for my admitting you beyond the *ante-chamber of my affections*, till I have seen proofs of your contrition registered in whole quires of intelligence and entertainment.

If I could condescend to embrace you in my present humour, it would be for the welcome (thrice welcome) information of Sir John Sebright's perfect recovery, and the happy situation of Bill Amherst and his family. These are men indeed! such as my soul loveth; and if immortality upon this clod of earth could belong to any two-legged animal, surely these two, from the gentle

* An accident, subsequently mentioned, during the naval review.

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and beneficent tenor of their lives, are amongst those who might best lay claim to it. You are a hard-hearted fellow, Brad, and don't love women, else I would tell you that the trembling exultation of two such angels as the wives of Sir John and Billy, in marking the growing health of the husbands of their choice, is to *me* an idea infinitely affecting. But those fine feelings which Providence has been pleased to twine into the fibres of my constitution, are *caviare* to the multitude; and for the present I will not do you the honour to suppose you susceptible of any similar impressions.

I have had *nine* different descriptions of your Portsmouth show, and am happy to see that a measure of so much propriety met with success so complete and satisfactory. Several millions of John Bulls appear *now* to be all of one mind with regard to their Sovereign and his seamen, which in these latter times is somewhat of a rarity; but I will take upon me to assure them, that in whatever light they set their royal master within the reach of their inspection, they will see him to equal advantage.

I have said this a hundred times (and I spoke from the heart), but I was a placeman, the son of a pensioner, a ribboned slave, and a *Scotchman*, and therefore not to be believed. I have now the bulk of my fellow subjects on my side, and by and bye I shall not meet with a dissenter from that political tenet to preach to, unless I look for them (which in my sober senses I never shall) in that temple of patriotism, the Guildhall of London.

Poor Mr. Miller! Poor Henry Woodfall! not a paragraph nor a squib of sulphurous materials! yet Sandwich's flag was flying, and Bradshaw's *cream* besprinkled the ocean! Hang me! if, in their place, I would have let you off so cheap! As to the honour you enjoyed in having your *leg broken* by the tiller of the royal yacht, I hope that in the first kingly review of

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every succeeding reign a *Bradshaw of your line* shall be singled out to undergo the same experiment. It is the least a King of England can do, to distinguish a family whose ancestor showed such a respect for Majesty in the person of the *Royal Martyr!* But enough of this: your pride is already puffed up within an inch of bursting.

Adieu, dear Admiral,

R. M. K.

August 14th.

I am this evening to set out for Hungary, by which I suppose you conclude that I am running away from the debts of my mission. Not *unlikely*, my lord, yet *not true*; for the capital of Hungary is at no greater distance from hence than Henley from London; and there I am to pay my court to the Archduchess and Duke of Saxe Teschen to-morrow, and after a princely repast, and an evening fandango, I shall again step into my chaise, and fly back to Vienna. There will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth in both capitals; but what can a man do? Ubiquity comes not within his lot!

In this jaunt, as in every other excursion or party, I am blessed with a trusty companion, in the person of Bartholomew Gradenigo, Knight, Senator, and Ambassador of the Republic of Venice. A rare hand, a man among a million, for he shall preside at a feast, bamboozle an old woman, or flirt with a young one, with any *He* in Christendom; and then, with all this, he is as honest as the day is long, and has had four Doges of Venice amongst his ancestors; which you must needs think renders his company infinitely agreeable. Alas! alas! the Turks have got hold of him; and in six months he removes his household gods from hence to the banks of the Hellespont. I could blubber like a

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boy when I think of it; for Gradenigo is to me meat, drink, and raiment. It may be some comfort to you, my dear friend, to know that this jewel of an ambassador is as fat and *gouty*, and *nearly* as great a *courtier*, as your lordship. If I could bring you two together for six months, and feast my five senses with you for that time, I would consent that *chaos should come again*, at the end of it. But human nature does not reach that pitch of felicity!

Apropos; why have you made a secret to me of the abdication of the Great Mogul in favour of our royal Master? I have been wished joy of it a hundred times, and am in expectation of receiving my credentials in a post or two, as Plenipo from the Peninsula of Indostan, with two or three lacks of rupees to support the splendour of my mission. Never were lacks more wanted, or more welcome than those I look for.

Adieu,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, August 25th, 1773.

THANKS to you for your No. 26, and likewise for your hints about the *Milanites* * (that are to be); and if they come in my way (which Heaven avert!) they shall have my best services, and not the *shadow* of a *visit! N'est-il pas vrai? Monsieur de la Crême*—that's your meaning? Everything as *Sir Bob*, nothing as *Sir Pleni*.

Now I would have you to know, Sir, that in matters of punctilio, and etiquette, and right and left hand, and all the other Sir Clement Cotterell*ish* nonsense, I can intersect, in twenty different shapes, the narrow space which divides dutiful observance and dignified stateliness, and never go a hair-breadth beyond my purpose. I

* The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in disgrace at Court.

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wish, my dear Brad, that you were fairly kicked out of office, and turned adrift by his Majesty's ministers, that I might have the pleasure of showing you how nicely I can infuse the first cold drops of courtly venom into a pailful of stale cordiality, so as to *curdle* the whole, and separate the two substances for ever afterwards.

You fancy yourself now in the very *core* of my good graces; and so to be sure you are. Because why? You have two or three pretty employments, and a tolerable share of the ministerial confidence. But with all this, my dear lord, if henceforth it shall please Lord North (or any given *premier*) to withdraw from you the breath of his nostrils, I will be bound in the space of three months to retract every jot of our intimacy; and by such imperceptible degrees, that, without knowing how the deuce it came about, you shall find yourself reduced to the distant civility of a *quondam* acquaintance, and yet shall never dare to tax Sir Robert with ingratitude.

There, my dear Brad, is the advantage of a *liberal* education, and I hold it to be a point of as high importance in a man who has his fortune to make, to know how to *unfetter* himself *handsomely* from unfashionable friends, as to be master of the talent of seizing the first feather of the rising wing of favour. But all this is theory, and I long to show you a little of my *practice*. There's Lord Frederick, now; he can do me justice; for he must needs remember how, upon his being dismissed from the Privy Seal, and before he got the registership, I trimmed matters so judiciously, that he had not the least hold of me, *whilst out of place*, and that I was again his *bosom friend* before the seals of his new office were cold.

Do, my dear Brad, pray do me the favour to step a little into the *mire of minority*, only for a month or so,

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that I may have some chance for sport with you in my own way; but reserve it for *next meeting* with

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, August 28th.

You are persuaded, no doubt, that in every great capital a man may, by taking some pains, find out a few choice companions of his own stamp and cast. An arrant mistake, my good lord, and one which I have experienced to my cost. This city is, in many respects, amongst the first in Europe. We have thousands of nobility; universities and academies in abundance; lawyers without end; and clergymen of all colours. I have sought in vain for my *fellows* in all these societies, and what will surprise you more is this, that if (in the course of the last nine months) there has been handled with ability or pleasantry in either of them, any one subject of instruction, moral, civil, or political, it certainly has not been within ear-shot of your friend the Plenipo. All this is nothing; but if, in the same space of time, he had been witness to one joyous meeting, to one hearty laugh, performed by man, woman, or child, he would have taken his share of that gaiety in *lieu of* the information he thirsts after, and have thought himself a gainer by the bargain. The ephemeral fly, which is born in the morning to die at night, might hold up the conversation of one-half our most brilliant circles. The play, the dance, your horse, my coach, a pretty embroidery, or a well-fancied lining, these are the favourite topics; upon every one of which I am a numskull of the first water. I never play at cards; *ergo*, I am not only a stupid fellow, but an useless one.

I would not have you to think, however, that we want capabilities for better purposes than these; but education

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and custom are everything, and we have been so much habituated to swim upon the surface of things, that we never take the trouble to inquire whether there be any bottom or not.

With you *Johns* in England, 'tis quite otherwise; for you are often so cursedly profound, that you are never at ease till you are groping and floundering in the very bed of the river. I have seen scores of you stick in the mud, and seldom it is that you show your heads above water. I hate all extremes in society, but I must needs say, that that which falls to my lot carries with it, *now and then*, an insipidity that wears me to the very bone. As I hope for mercy, the King should breed his foreign ministers from the cradle to that calling, give them the education of the department they are to belong to, and by denying them the good things which are peculiar to his kingdoms, fit them for the enjoyment of those which belong to others. I am not puppy enough to think myself wiser, cleverer, or more worthy of esteem than the many people I meet with daily; but I say, and persist in thinking, that 'tis a hard thing to stand alone in the midst of a great city, and be forced to say, as I do, that an eel is more like an oyster than I am to a German fine gentleman.

Love me all of you as my patience deserves,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, September 1st, 1773.

I HAVE, according to your request, laid your dulness at the feet of his Majesty's Plenipo, who, in consideration of that meekness and modesty which shine in your No. 27, has agreed to measure hereafter the merits of his friends' recreations by no other criterion than the scale of Fahrenheit's thermometer, and to make very proper allowance for the variations of the atmosphere.

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His Excellency bade me assure you, that, on the 20th August, your weather must have been airy and pleasant to a great degree, as manifestly appears by the productions of that period. When his Excellency was pleased to pronounce this favourable judgment, I observed that he looked as placid and condescending as ever I saw a minister of his rank to do in all my life. So that business is done, my dear Brad; you are now in high favour with the Plenipo; and when your fat ale arrives, I shall employ it properly in keeping down the fire of his genius, and preventing any random spark from singeing the whiskers of his pains-taking correspondents.

Would it were in my power to indulge your curiosity with some flashy descriptions of gala days, and state trappings; but, alas! the present imperial reign has almost totally abolished those gaudy exhibitions, and instead of fifty days in the year in which every grandee was permitted, to give a full scope to the genius of his tailor, and clap upon his back the produce of a thousand acres, we have now but one solitary first of January, to air our finery, and kick up the dust of pageantry. The last New Years' Day cost me seven-and-thirty shillings to the scourers, for furbishing up my Danish liveries, besides seatings to the varlets' breeches, and white chalk for their beaver laces. My predecessor's state coach was tickled up with lead and leaf-gold, wherever the hand of time had touched it roughly; and in it sat Sir Robert, whose portly person was bedizened with a spick and span new regimental suit, richly ornamented with three-and-forty embroidered button-holes, and two shoulder-knots stiff with gold; not to mention two yards and a-half of as handsome Bath ribbon as ever shone upon doughty warlike shoulder. There was an elegance, a taste, a dignified magnificence in the whole, on which my modesty prevents me from expatiating. You see, my dear sir, that I have a pen for a procession, and what a pity it is

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that the present emperor, by an unaccountable simplicity of manners, and hatred of show, should have prevented me from returning often to this favourite theme.

I confess that I should find no great difficulty in obeying your lordship's subsequent demands, by furnishing a few smart touches about teeth and tweezers.* But I am afraid that your lordship is not the only person who dips into my letters, and there may be people in the world who would rather forgive a plot against the state, than the smallest and most harmless pleasantry in regard to personal foibles. I have been too long a politician not to have acquired a due deference for inoffensive vanity, which, if properly laid hold on, is, in my opinion, one of the most convenient handles of society; and, strange as you may think it, I hold it to be less dangerous to hint to any man in high office, in whatever country you please, that he has a flaw in his character, than to tell him abruptly that he has a hole in his stocking. But you understand me, and I 'll be bound you never alluded to the possibility of a lordly squint during the administration of the Earl of Bute, nor touched upon tallow complexions in the hearing of the late Mr. Grenville.

Such are the fetters which prudence (that stale daughter of Hugo Grotius,) has hung upon the end of my goose-quill; nor can I be surprised at the preference you give to those interesting dispatches which are furnished to you by my fellow-labourer, the indefatigable Mr. Cressener.

I have not a syllable of news to communicate, that would satisfy your carpenter for the trouble of mending your pantry door; though I must be so bold as to say, that there was a time, and that not above eighteen months ago, when, by a proper application of my letters

* An obvious allusion to the well-known *petit-maitre*-ship of Prince Kaunitz.

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from Denmark, you might have prevailed upon that gentleman to give your house, your offices, and your stables a thorough repair for twenty years to come, and not a farthing to pay!

You are an honest fellow for giving me such good news of Sir John and Lady Sebright, and for having reported so faithfully my sincere wishes for their welfare. Do me the same service with all our dear creatures and their husbands. Adieu.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, October 13th, 1773.

Well, Sir, you have been in the country, and so have I. You have your dukes and ducalities, I my princes and palatines; with more of the dignified foibles which pertain to high birth, than ever fell to the lot of your whole Anglo-Saxon-Norman house of peers put together. Yet these hurt not me, nor did they hinder me from passing in the midst of them a pleasant and jocund fortnight as any fortnight can possibly be when half a dozen of my chosen comrades were not present. Our pleasantry in Moravia was not precisely the same as that at Mistley;* but there is a *mode* in merriment as there is in everything else, and I don't care a twopenny piece by what rule I am entertained, provided that my soul laughs in its earthly tenement, and that all goes smooth and easy. Our landlord, Prince Kaunitz, has read Rabelais, and made a proper use of his maxims. "*Sois heureux à la mode,*" is the only rule laid down for everybody; and we were five-and-thirty masters and mistresses who adhered strictly to the letter of that *golden law*. Whenever you get your little four-square mansion in the

* The seat of Richard Rigby, Esq.

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Isle of Wight, inscribe those words over the door of it, my dear friend, and be sure to stamp them deep upon the mind of the master of the house. In short, my journey to the country has done me good, to mind as well as body; and it has brought me into a closer connection with several valuable people, than all the frippery of town etiquette would permit me to form in the preceding six months. That's the advantage of country living; and faith (between you and me) it is almost the only advantage which belongs to it.

I hope you don't love hunting, and shooting, and coursing, and sniping, and toiling in mud and mire, for the honour of being the *cook's purveyor*. No; you are too much a man of sense and *delicacy;* and I am sure of your approbation when I confess that all the monsters of the forest were slaughtered by these dignified Nimrods, whilst I fetched a walk with fair ladies in the precincts of the shady grove, or, at most, was pleased to approve the labours of the chase from the windows of a gilded landau, in which a dame of quality sat by my side, and two angelic damsels *vis-à-vis*. Don't read this account of my hunting to your brawny beef-eating barons of England; for they have no notion of taste or elegance, and would rather see a hare in her form than the fairest *belle* in Austria. Goths! Goths! my sweet lord! I only wish you could go with me into Moravia next year, and see (only for a start) how we great people live. *Apropos*—you and the Duke of Grafton shall have your Tokay, whenever I meet with any good; and that—whether you are *in or out*.

This sheet may possibly find you at the last bottle with my brother Basil. Tell him and his helpmate tha if they, by their justice and generosity, make the voice of gladness sound through the mountains of Jamaica, they shall have a large share in the *core* of my affections on their return. I long to see how far downright

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honesty and blunt zeal can succeed in the governing of mankind. I have seen, before now, parts, policy, law, and learning all meet in one composition, and yet make a sorry governor among them; and if Basil prospers and pleases, as I hope and believe, it will confirm my favourite maxim, that in a wife, or a ruler of men (often synonymous terms), no two ingredients are of such extensive use as a beneficent heart, and an active integrity. There 's no fear of Basil. I 'll pawn my life for him that he will do as much for *others*, with as *little* thought for *self*, as any fellow in the King's dominions.

Yours, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, Jan. 7th, 1774.

WELCOME to my arms, my long-lost correspondent! I must, in the effusion of my heart, tell you a little secret, which is, that the *peccavi* of a friend is balm to my wounds; that the cure it effects is almost instantaneous,—because why? I have no more gall in my system than a sucking turtle-dove. Don't now go to make a bad use of this key to my character, which a wiser man than me would have kept in his pocket. It would be a baseness of which I cannot suspect you, and which even your Treasury education could not justify. Come, shake hands, Brad: all is well; and now to our old chit-chat, as if nothing had ever interrupted it. Oh! I must indulge my fancy by transcribing a few lines from an unfinished letter, which I have just now found in my *porte-feuille*, and which must have been written by some very touchy gentleman, in a moment of bitterness. Perhaps it may make you laugh, though neither you nor I know the persons concerned. At any rate it will make a pretty contrast with the style of this epistle I am now inditing—so here goes:—

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"SIR,—Though not altogether hackneyed in the ways of your world, I had long known that in the crazy metropolis you inhabit, a man may be the idol of the people on Monday, and be hanged in effigy on the Friday following. That a man of the Court might embrace you at bed-time with all the demonstrations of the most cordial friendship, lay his head on the pillow, dream that you might ask him a favour *one day*, and therefore *wisely* forget your name in the morning. I had known that a certain quantity of salt water let in between two sworn comrades, would in a short time obliterate all remembrance of the navigator, and free the landsman from every tie of attachment. But what I owe to your lordship, is the precise and accurate experiment of the quantum of time and distance which *can and ought* to cancel in the mind of a man every obligation, and root out all those paltry virtues, such as truth, constancy, and gratitude, which the shallow part of mankind suppose to be the strongest bonds of society. *Ten months and sixteen days precisely*—not an hour more; your lordship has proved it to a demonstration: and it is by your goodness that I am now enabled to calculate so nicely in matters of that sort, that when I see any two brothers hugging one another to-day, I say to myself *slyly*—on the 17th day of next November, I may expect to see these same two gentlemen spitting in each other's faces! This is mighty clever, mighty convenient, and particularly to *me*, who (I confess to your lordship) had the misfortune to be born a very silly, a very credulous fellow, a mere gull in friendship!"——

Well, Brad, the rest of the sheet is pretty much in the same style. He must have been a very choleric blade who wrote it; can you guess why he did not send it? I suspect that the poor author was a Christian,

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which is a weakness that some people still have, *even in our enlightened days.*

I rejoice very sincerely, my dear friend, at finding that the little difficulties in pecuniary matters, to which your generous turn of mind had subjected you, are in a fair way to be removed. I claim a share in those high spirits which are returning upon you; but I must beg of you to remember that whenever it may happen that care or pain are brooding in your breast, there is no man on earth who will do more than myself to alleviate or dispel the wayward impressions. I am, perhaps, a pretty light-hearted companion for a man in prosperity; but if I know my own *forte*,—it lies in administering comfort and consolation to the mind of a friend labouring under anxiety or distress. May you never stand in need of that proof of my talents, but if it should unfortunately happen—*you are a cold-hearted dog if you spare me.* This is grave writing, Master Brad—but I tell it you once for all—and now for other matters.

You know, nay you are morally convinced that Lord Suffolk's friendship is my plight anchor in life; you know that the conquest of Denmark could not have brought me anything of half its value. I need not, therefore, tell you with what pleasure I learned his recovery from a long illness, and the continuance of that partial esteem with which his lordship honours me. But I cannot think of employing so good a man's friendship in hammering a *nail which will not drive.* I have good reason to believe that the door of St. Stephen's Chapel will not be opened to me in the way you aim at. Lord March is probably pre-engaged, and Lord North has many better men to employ* than one

* The writer's modesty led him to undervalue his chances of success. The representation of the county of Tweedale, in which his property was situated, was, on his return to England, proposed to him by Lord North, and unanimously carried.

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whose vocation may, in all likelihood, detain him for some years abroad. I have a sort of repugnance to sit down in any house where I am not highly welcome, and cannot be in some degree useful. I would not swallow a parliamentary equivocation as to *qualification* for the Speaker's gown; but if the King's servants think that I ought to represent my own paltry county, or any boroughs of Scotland, to which I am entitled by my small property, I shall undertake that service (as I would do any other) with cheerfulness. Now you know, my dear Brad, that I have not a shilling to bestow (nor the intention of bestowing a shilling) upon acquiring a seat in parliament. Ergo—as I told you before, we shall do well to keep Lord Suffolk's friendship for a better purpose. Tell my lord so from me; and tell him that I love and respect him with every nerve of my heart.

I must now talk to you, my friend, about my own money matters, which are indeed (and *unavoidably*) at a lower ebb than ever I knew them. The King's goodness has set me down (and I hope for a length of years) in the very spot of the whole continent where, in point of personal satisfaction, and (as I flatter myself in *time*) of public utility, my own views and wishes would have fixed me. I am (and I am proud to say it) the most contented being in the dominions of Austria. But it is nevertheless true that I have already almost devoured my scanty patrimony in changing of establishments, and doing here, not vain or ostentatious things, but the *needful*, the *essentially needful*, for the honour of my gracious employer. This preface looks like my thanking your honour for putting me in mind that I begin to stand high on the list of Colonels, and that I may soon look for a regiment. Quite otherwise; the King shall never be asked for anything unreasonable, by *me*. There are many men still above me, whose seniority of service gives them a better title to a regiment than I can

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pretend to (excepting a Highland one); and I am one of those who think that the King has done for the Keiths ten times more than they deserve, and that these ragamuffins from the North are very rapacious indeed, if they cannot wait to be served with future good things *in their turn.*

Strange language this from a man, who owns his poverty, and is *cramped by it;* but I tell you it is the language I would (and I believe did) hold in the cabinet, of one of the best as well as greatest men in Europe. How the deuce am I to get out of debt, then? say you; why, I 'll tell you all my secrets. I will endeavour, by the strictest order (not economy) in my housekeeping, to make both ends meet. I restrict my ambition in regard to money, to the certainty of paying everybody as I go on, and dying possessed of five hundred golden guineas, *lawful property.* If indeed, and that may possibly happen, I shall in a little time see the bottom of my private purse, without my conscience telling me that I have drained it by any private vice,—I shall, in that case, not feel the smallest scruple in saying to my worthy Lord Suffolk, I am reduced to my last guinea; neither my beneficent sovereign, nor your lordship, can wish that I should dip into the pockets of my tradespeople. Give me some public money, or some equivalent for it, in an honest way, *if my services are worth having,* and trust me I shall be a better economist of that money than I have been of my own. I never saw fair reason, and downright truth, fail of their effect in this world; and if ever I am reduced to make this speech, I 'll bet you fifty pounds (poor as I am) that his lordship's answer will make me easy. You don't know (and how the deuce should you, for you were bred amongst courtiers), that a man may not care a twopenny piece about ambition or interest, and yet be neither a fool nor a stoic. So much for my confession, which you

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will undoubtedly clench with a—Hang the fellow! he will die a beggar, and *deserves it!* I have seven princesses, eighteen nobles, and one cardinal to dine with me to-morrow; the Aulic council in a body on Wednesday; the Counts of the circle of Suabia on Saturday; yet am I dog enough to sigh after a Rigby! Lord, lord, shall I never laugh again?

Yours,
R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, Jan. 15th, 1774.

I AM heartily sorry that Lord North fell from his horse, but I *infer* from thence that he *was upon one*, and consequently intended to take an airing: which is a sign that amongst the *bettermost* people in England the locomotive faculty is not totally neglected. I hope his lordship will sit long and steadily in the ministerial saddle, and find both his spirits and his stomach improved by cantering an hour or two every day in St. Stephen's Chapel, upon some pleasant tit of opposition.

Evening, six o'Clock.

Whilst I was taking a little morning lounge with your lordship in the manner you see above, a message from a most amiable and virtuous lady (a mother of a family) called me to keep my promise, by being present at the reading of Gulliver's Travels to two sweet girls and a boy, her children, all under ten years of age. The lady was obeyed, as you will believe, and at half an hour after one (I am exact as to the hour) the lady was shipwrecking poor Samuel Gulliver upon the coast of Lilliput, to me and her children—when, behold! a pretty smart shock of an earthquake, which lasted about a minute, interrupted her narrative, without creating any violent emotion or fear. It was undulating and slow, but some

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of the chamber-doors creaked on their hinges, and some bits of lime came trundling from the roof of the house. After an interval of less than two minutes, we felt a second shock, much quicker, in the same direction, of west to east, but tremulous, abrupt, and in some measure waving from the horizontal line of the first. A large crystal lustre in the room, with all its dangling ornaments, rung like a chime of bells, and all the servants in the house began to be in an uproar. Mr. Gulliver was laid aside, and we all walked down into the court-yard of the hotel. The weather was calm and pleasant; a gentle thaw with sunshine. We talked for half an hour to the children (who were much more curious than frightened), about comets and earthquakes; and it would have done your heart good to have seen the lady, as solicitous in that moment as in the calmest hour of her life, to prevent her children from adopting false fears, or false impressions. The earth having stood still (to listen to her sage admonitions) we returned to the library—but put a mark in Mr. Gulliver till another day; and I, your humble servant (having swallowed a draught of admiration of so many good qualities), returned to my neck of mutton, and ministerial cyphers at home. 'Tis at the issue of one and t' other, I give you this instructive account of an earthquake, which will make a tremendous figure in the German newspapers. Ah! Brad! if the *narrative* of an earthquake would mend your manners, or awaken your sloth! You are a sad set of men, and I think my dance of to-day should make me resolve to break off all connexion with you; but you may still assure Frederick and the Gang that I loved them whilst the earth stood still, and mayhap may do so, let it wag as it will. Yours, &c.,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, February 16*th*, 1774.

I SIT down to write with a boyish sort of enthusiasm, about something which a sagacious and deep-read politician should hardly deign to take notice of. But, my dear Anne, I have not yet learnt to value things by their magnitude, and when I tell you the object of my admiration is no other than a country dance, I am not afraid of losing an inch of ground in the opinion of the Hermits. On the contrary, I am careful to cherish and keep up that aptitude for innocent enjoyments which Providence has kindly implanted in me; and make no scruple to own, that when the Vienna puppet show is a good one, I endeavour to form an intimate acquaintance with Punch in the first days of the fair.

But here goes a bit of description of this said country dance, which has set us all a raving. Know, then, that about three weeks ago, *sixteen couple* of our chosen belles and beaux put themselves under the direction of the great Noverre, in order to learn from him one of the prettiest figure dances one can possibly conceive, with the intention of exhibiting it at the public masquerade. The principal ladies of this set (the list of which I give for my father's sake) were Mesdames Thun, Wallenstein, Wurmbrand (née Lichtenstein), Paar, Pergen, Walmoden, Tarouca (née Schönbrunn), Esterhazy, Choteck (née Clary), Hoyos, Zinzendorff (née Schwartzenberg), with Mesdemoiselles Schoenborn, Canal, and Bassewitz. They were dressed *à la Provençale*, in blue and white striped satin; and nothing could be more handsome or airy. Their appearance at the masquerade ten days ago, before three thousand spectators, gave universal satisfaction; and kindled up a spark of keenness in sixteen other couples to imitate or excel them. These were composed of still higher personages—as the Arch-

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duchesses Marie Christine and Elizabeth, with the Archduke Maximilian, shone at the head of the list; and were followed by Mesdames Hatzfeld, Palfy (née Colloredo), Metternich, Tekeli, Trautmansdorff (née Colloredo), Esterhazy (née Stahremberg), Goès (née Schwartzenberg), Csaky; with Mesdemoiselles Altems, Palfy, and Czernin. They were dressed in the same form with the others, but in rose-coloured and white striped satin, to make a distinction and variety. The country dance Noverre taught *these* was still more elegant than the first, and the Empress, to give both parties fair play, and to prevent jealousy, ordered that they should exhibit *singly*, and in *conjunction*, at a private ball at Court, as last night.

Conceive now, Mrs. Anne, their imperial majesties, and about one hundred and fifty chosen spectators, seated in the great ball-room, behind an elevated balustrade, with a large orchestra in front on the opposite side, and the whole floor of the room left to the discretion of these merry dancers, not one of whom had yet appeared in the ball-room.

Upon the first stroke of the fiddles, two opposite doors were thrown open, and all the blues on one side, and all the roses on the other, entered gaily, dancing in the Provençal style, and *mixing as they met*. After two or three figures in this medley manner, the roses drew back at once to the balustrade, and left the floor to the blues, who went through their original country dance with infinite precision and grace. They in their turn made room for the roses, who did themselves no dishonour by their emulation, and were, at least, equal to the former in the choice and design of the figures they went through. Each separate dance lasted seven or eight minutes, and when the second was upon the point of concluding, the blues were most ingeniously courted by their rivals to join, and by a *serpentine* stroke of Noverre's genius,

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they were twisted and mingled with the others, and *sixty-four handsome men and women* dazzled the eyes, and delighted the hearts of their adorers, for five minutes more, in all the mazes and groups of elegant entanglement, and variegated contrast. At a decisive squeak of the music, all hats in the air, and a low obeisance to the throne! Hey? Mrs. Anne, what say you to my description? Did I gaze with rapture? did I follow certain favourite figures through all their intricacies? did I feel a Provençale twitching at my heart? was I blue? was I rose? I leave all this to your spinstership's sagacity; but remember, if you think this a dull epistle, and you don't like my dance, *you are no sister of Sir Robert's.*

I wish you had seen Mrs. Johnson at the ball. She was certainly, to a vulgar eye, one of the least shining figures in the hall; but a propriety, a look and mien of modest merit, an expression of *sensibility!* You understand me, Mrs. Anne, or you are more of a numskull than I take you for. Adieu.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, Feb. 17th, 1774.

You know nothing about a Popish Carnival, do ye? You have no idea of what it is to live for six weeks together in a kettle-drum, as I have been doing; and because why? His Holiness has been pleased to allot that space of time yearly to the gratification of every worldly appetite, and probably with a view to give one a surfeit of them. If that surfeit be salutary, I am in a state of grace; for no man ever saw Ash Wednesday arrive with more cheerfulness than I have done. Now for a little friendly confab, in answer to your warm-hearted No. 1.

First, then, for the Tweedale business, in which I

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find my debt of gratitude greatly increased towards the several illustrious personages who are so good as to interest themselves in it. You, my dear Brad, have shown an activity and zeal which I cannot sufficiently acknowledge; and I make no scruple to rest the whole affair upon so firm a basis, with this only stipulation, that neither the Duke of Grafton, Lord North, nor the Earl of Earls, be teased or plagued to make of me (what in all likelihood God never intended) a lawgiver of nations. If the matter can be carried smoothly, without injuring the claim of any modest man upon the spot, I shall look upon it as a happy circumstance; but whether it shall be my lot, for seven years to come, to get into the chapel of St. Stephen by the great door, or to tip the old man for a peep into politics from the gallery, I shall feel myself equally honoured by the good opinion of my patrons, and invariably solicitous to deserve the continuance of it. I shall write to old Keith, to give you some clear notions of what they tell me may produce an opening in my little county; for at this distance, and with the slight information I am master of, I might confuse matters in endeavouring to explain them. If he should not come up to town this year, do you, my dear lord, write him ten lines for elucidation, and I promise you it will not be his fault if all is not fairly stated. Our family have long had the privilege of *writing frank* letters, without being over anxious to obtain the right of directing them in the same manner. But Brad has undertaken it, and R. M. K. shall hereafter stand for eighteen pence in any post-house in Christendom. Enough of this *bore*. I say no more; a word's enough to the wise, and half a word is more than enough to the kind-hearted. This phrase recalls me to Lord Suffolk, whose goodness to me is the most flattering, as well as indefatigable, of all sentiments. I do not trouble his lordship with frequent expressions of

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my gratitude, because I know that his own heart tells him what mine is, and that he looks upon my warm attachment to the end of life as a part of his goods and chattels. I wish, from my heart, that a hale Highland constitution could be shared like a country common; and then hang me if I did not spare a comfortable slice of mine to Lord Suffolk, as the only adequate return I can ever make for all his benefits. This constitutional liberality will seem less meritorious, when I tell you that I am possessed of ten times more health than can at present be turned to any good purpose by a fellow like me; who is at once a platonic lover, a water drinker, an insipid courtier, and a dull politician. Fallen, how fallen! Aye, this is a mournful consideration; but there must be some leaden figures in the puppet-show of Europe, and as I find myself growing every day more heavy, I comfort myself that it is *all for the good of Old England.* If ever you men of the ministry bring me home, and are at a loss for a place to set me down in, you need only recollect the plumber's yard, near Hyde-park corner, and stick Sir Robert (the Imperial Mercury) between the haymaker and his wife, who have stood snugly there these twenty years.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, March 5th, 1774.

I HAVE conducted friend Chamier's* botanical negociation in so masterly a manner, that in the course of three or four days I shall be in possession of as many seeds of different plants as will make up the weight of

* The amiable Under-Secretary at the War-office, and relative of Mr. Bradshaw; whose passion for flowers had induced him to request Sir Robert to procure him rare specimens from the Imperial gardens.

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half a pound. But as I perceive that Mons. Jaquin * has very needlessly taken the trouble to wrap them up in forty or fifty different parcels, I shall presume (in order to save pains and postage) to empty them *all* together into one strong sheet of *whity brown*, which shall be forwarded without loss of time. Now, my dear Brad, you will easily conceive that this little expedient of mine will add greatly to the keenness as well as rapture of Chamier, and the King's gardener; to whom my best advice is, immediately upon the receipt of this, to clear out and prepare with the greatest nicety about half an acre of their best kitchen ground, upon which they are to sow my multifarious *half pound*, as soon as it arrives; and then, laying themselves down upon the ground at the two extremities of their *half acre*, they may in less than a month (especially if it showers plentifully) read Monsieur Jaquin as he rises out of the earth, and display their knowledge by describing in Gardeners' Latin every tree, pea, bush, or berry, as it first pops its green head above the fostering mould.

Common sense, my dear lord, is as rare a plant as any in the whole budget; and your lordship will not be surprised that I have, upon this occasion, thrown in my small quota for the benefit of botany. I dare hardly take upon me to request that my share in the transaction should be made known to the King's gardener *in person;* but if Mr. Chamier would be so kind as to take an opportunity, in one of their learned lectures, just to hint to that great man the name of his seedsman, Sir Robert, at Vienna, it might do me a great deal of service in bettering my fortune, which at present is considerably on the wane. I hate vanity, my dear Brad, and that you know; but as my money is gone, it may not be amiss to give you some idea of the

* The Emperor's head gardener.

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advantages it has produced to me in my public capacity. During the late carnival, I had the honour to feed, fatten, and stuff at my table, at least three hundred of the first lords and ladies of the Holy Empire. I went to work ably, for I laid the groundwork of their surfeits with beef, pudding, and potatoes, for the honour of Old England, building thereupon with all the ragouts, pies, and sauces of France; and finishing the superstructure with the jellies, ices, spices, and devildums of Italy. This succeeded to a wonder. Every guest smacked his lips and unbuttoned his waistcoat at the second course; and several ladies had their stay-laces cut open, in *honor of my confections;* so that in the space of six weeks I had the satisfaction to see that no less than three jaundices, five dropsies, and thirteen apoplexies amongst those great personages, were fairly and honestly laid to my door, and that of my kitchen. I need not add, that with so much well-earned glory on my side, I am not mean-spirited enough to grudge the melting of my last guinea. It would, I own, give me pleasure to know where I shall find, in six months hence, a leg of mutton for self and servants; as my best friend, the butcher, talks of leaving off business. But this is only a mere matter of curiosity, for you know that no man who has six or seven sounding titles like mine, and three or four Brads and Rigbys near the British treasury, can be in any danger of starving.

I was in rare trim for scribbling nonsense, when a grave Aulic counsellor (of a light airy figure, like the late Lord Winchelsea) forced my door, in order to furnish me with an hour or two's amusement, by explaining to me the lawful right of the branch of Hohenzollern to the male fief of Kecklinghausen, which, indeed, he made out as clear as noon day; and if you, my dear friend, have still any doubts about the matter, I will lay it out before you in black and white. You have no

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notion of these pretty pastimes, which now and then fall to the lot of Hugo Grotius's children; but I *conjecture* that you may have some Irish cousins who can plague you as heartily as any German counsellor whatever, and *that, you know, comes to the same thing.*

I forgot to tell you that I am famished for news from Boston, and curious beyond measure to know what Dr. Franklin says in his own defence. Everybody here talks wildly about liberty, and electricity, *because they understand neither;* and I am shrewdly suspected to be a friend to monarchy and King George, and therefore to have seen everything that regards America and the Doctor with an eye of partiality. I shall fight, however, a rare battle, under your banner; only give me now and then a few materials to dumbfounder my noisy opponents. I ask only a clear stage and no favour. Adieu, God bless you, your letters are the *baume de vie* to

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, April 2nd, 1774.

Your alarm during the illness of a certain lady does you no injury *in my* opinion, because I allow every man his oddity, and that of loving one's *own* wife may be forgiven, provided that a man is not impudent enough to own it in public. I have not told a creature in Vienna that Monsieur de la Crême had been guilty of such a weakness, because I make it a rule never to tell improbable stories, and because anecdotes relating to conjugal affection would hardly gain credit here. Do you know, my dear friend, I am sometimes a good deal mortified in observing that John Bull is still unpolished enough to set a high price upon certain threadbare fashions, and exploded virtues, which nobody in more

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polite countries would like to be suspected of; and you must forgive me, my dear Brad, if I just hint to you that there are capitals in the world where, for these hundred years past, no man has so much as dreamt of weeping for his wife. Thus, you see, I have convicted your lordship of *two vulgarities* in one letter, but I have touched upon them with a gentle hand, knowing that in other points your lordship is quite the man of fashion. Come abroad, Brad; I have told you again and again, that not even the taste of your neighbour, Sir William Chambers, can set the highest polish on your manners without a dash of foreign education. A six months' tour across sea, would do you, and half a dozen more of his Majesty's ministers, more good than you can possibly imagine.

I am glad to see that you are turning over a new leaf with the tea-spillers; and I should not be sorry if, while your hand is in, you should turn over *half a dozen;* for, to say the truth, those gentlemen had forgot the greatest part of their *catechism.* But you are wiser men and better politicians than I can pretend to be, and all I wish of you is to *think before you speak, and do what you threaten.* Your hobbling kind of gait in that walk, with your *two steps on,* and *three steps back,* have neither done yourselves much credit, nor good to anybody, as far as I can hear.* John Bull is a very honest, sedate, and firm-minded gentleman, when he reflects soberly. I am persuaded he will have done so upon this occasion, and I trust that the moderate and well-timed exertion of the parental authority, which is so naturally vested in him, will produce, without much bustle, the best and

* The sagacious, though at that time unfavourably disposed, King of Prussia, thus expressed the same sentiment to some English gentlemen: "If you intend conciliation, your measures are too rough; if subjection, too gentle."

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most durable effects upon the morals and filial duty of his turbulent children. You would laugh heartily if you heard half of the wild and absurd conjectures which are made within ear shot of the Highlander. He lets the small talkers by profession take their swing; but if a *Matadore* steps into the mud of false argument, Sir Robert does not fail to take the politest as well as shortest method of seizing him by the shoulder and lifting him out of the kennel. A little of your lordship's intelligence upon the subject, which is likely to grow more interesting every day, will, I assure you, be of real service to the knight, who is wedded to John Bull, and will not allow his character (which John often allows to be abused in open court, for want of proper instructions to his lawyers) to be called in question.

Good morning to your lordship,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, June 10th, 1774.

It was indeed very lucky for me that I did not know of the dangerous illness of Lord Suffolk till I heard of his perfect recovery. His gout is almost the only drawback I have in life, and without having faith in quacks, or the most distant wish that he should make experiments on his own constitution, I have sent to England, by my Turkish Dragoman, a parcel of powders for the gout, which are very gentle in their operation, and have been tried here with success by some people of the highest rank. You don't suppose I mean to go halves with the inventor (if they succeed, which pray inquire), and get rich by curing *Sir Laurences* in scores, but you will believe me when I say I would give half my present wealth to be the means of making life comfortable to my good Lord Suffolk. You tell me in your last that

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Mr. Stanley is the bearer of your No. 9, inclosing a letter from his lordship. I wish I had both, but I have never heard a syllable of Mr. Stanley since he left England. He will pop in here one of these days, and add to the score of *Johns* I possess already. They are good young men, and do us honour. I have Mr. Coke (*the* Coke), Mr. Monson, Mr. Watson, Mr. Galloway, &c.; and I expect to-morrow George Grenville's son, and Lord Bulkeley, with Mr. Fortescue, &c., &c. They seem to be pleased with this town, and I do my best to keep them so.

I think the Duke of Cleveland knows what to do with his money, else I should be sorry for his new accumulation. I have seen few heads that could carry thirty thousand pounds a year, without *ruling a little*, and still fewer hearts that were the better for their possession: but I am sure black George bids as fair as any man of my acquaintance to be both happier and more beneficent, because he is rich. Pray, offer my respects to the Duke of Cleveland, and assure him I shall ever retain the warmest sense of the obligations I owe to the Duke of Grafton.

You delight me by the account of my old gentleman's* health and spirits; and they will certainly have been augmented by the gracious reception of our master, and the kindness he has met with from so many warm-hearted friends. You ask me what the deuce the people see in those Keiths to be so partial to them? Why truly Brad, that's not a very easy question to solve; but in my notion the best quality about the Keiths is their universal good-will towards mankind, joined to the most cordial gratitude towards their benefactors. They are the most fortunate family I

* Mr. Keith, father of the writer, who was then paying a most gratifying, but, alas! (notwithstanding his then health and vigour), final visit to London.

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know, and certainly the more so *because they value what they have, and covet nothing.* To enjoy the blessings of this world is by far more difficult than to acquire them, and so here ends my dissertation!

I am preparing for the reception of my old friend, Mr. Conway, and I will show him camps in Austria, aye, and gold mines in Hungary, too, if I can get a fortnight's breathing time from the Hugo-Grotian oar. You think when I get into these mines, I might contrive to filch a *sample*, as you did when you held the purse of the nation; but I won't, for a rich Keith would be a monster in nature. *Apropos* to fortunes: I have just received a German newspaper, which gives me a great deal of insight into your's, and tells me many things which your modesty has been desirous to conceal. I am sure Dick Cox will take pleasure in translating for you; but that you may not die with impatience, I must tell you that my German newspaper has shrewdly discovered that Lord Suffolk is quitting his present employment for another (which I hope is a lie); secondly, that Lord Stormont is to be Secretary of State—and the great Mr. Bradshaw (I have put a + at your name in the black letter,) formerly secretary to the Earl of Bute, is to be—*created an Earl, and sent Ambassador to Paris.*

This last article I firmly believe, both because you formerly travelled as far as Calais with infinite advantage to yourself and others, consequently you are best acquainted with the French court, and all possible ministers, and master—as I am a living witness, of the French tongue in the highest perfection. If you have not already got a secretary to your embassy, I beg leave to recommend to your lordship the ingenious Dr. Franklin, who seems to be out of employment, and would take particular care of your private correspondence. I shall certainly call upon your Excellency

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at Paris the first time I pass that way; and yet there are people who will say that one learns nothing from newspapers. Why! without this sheet of three farthings, you might have been the oldest earl in England, before I had heard a word of the matter. I love a fat ambassador like your lordship; it gives one a good opinion of the country that sends him. You know the miseries of France in the late war were never fairly laid open to the public, till the scraggy Duke de Nivernois set his tiny foot on the shore at Dover. I myself am tolerably plump, but not to be compared to you; and why should I? for you know I am only a paltry plenipo. I have only to beg of you to say to the circle you shine in, every thing that ought to be said in my name, and in the language of affection. Adieu, my dear lord. I hope (spite of the newspaper) you are as much my friend as ever.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, June 23rd, 1774.

I HAVE a letter from my father of the 8th, full of good news. He had seen Lord Suffolk and all friends well. He is enchanted with the universal affection he has met with; and is setting out for Hampton Court, and Coombank, &c. Pray Brad, is it Christian-like to envy one's father?

And so my old friend, Mr. Conway, is upon the road to visit me; and welcome he shall be! for he was a kind patron to me, while I revelled in the wealth of eight and sixpenny half-pay. Let me tell you, Brad, if I had not a stock of gratitude about me, I should be one of the most miserable fellows upon earth. Pray, did old Keith and you get your *bore out* concerning St.

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Stephen's and his chapel? I fancy that fabric will fall to the ground, like so many others of the same nature; and I don't think the Danish Knight will break his heart about the matter. Yet that same chapel is become mighty jocose of late, and cannot fail to be highly entertaining.

You have had stout work in your session of Parliament. That same Quebec story has to me a world of meaning, and, perhaps, some years hence that bill may be found to have an effect as extensive and salutary as any that has passed for many years. These German newspapers are continually harping upon Lord Suffolk, Lord Stormont, and Lord Brad; I am particularly connected with all these, and yet I know nothing. To those who question me, I pretend to be at the bottom of everything; yet, in fact, the shoeblack in St. James's Street knows more of the secrets of that neighbourhood than I do. Will your parliament meet again, or are you all starting with your purses in your hands? Among the young Johns who are here, there are at least half a dozen who intend to serve poor old England with their best assistance and advice in the new parliament. They are comely fellows, have high spirits and good stomachs, and kick the world before them; so that I think the venerable lady will be greatly benefitted by such a recruit. Joking apart these young blades will do you honour, in or out of doors.

I suppose that my aged parent has turned his face northward long ere now; and carried home with him that peace of mind and contentment which pass all price or purchase. His visit was a proof at once of a good heart and a sound head. His son, Sir Robert, is grown a grave blockhead by all accounts; but I am told he is not incorrigible if he soon falls again into good hands. These d—d Turks and Russians won't let an honest emigrant return to half a dozen years'

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grass and clover in his own country. Surely they won't fight eternally,, let them be ever so bloody-minded! This is but a shabby sheet, but I am a penitent sinner, and whether saint or sinner,

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

July 24th, 1774.

TELL Lord Barrington that his two nephews are here; that they are very genteel and well-behaved young men, and that they shall have the best company, wine, and welcome, that this capital can afford them. I have just twenty Johns under my wing at this moment, exclusive of Mr. Conway, whom I expect, with three or four more in a week's time. I think I do them justice both in breeding and feeding; and they seem highly satisfied with me and my dear creatures, who lay themselves out to give them satisfaction.

They shall begin next week to swallow my silver dishes, (like Eneas's harpies) for I have melted down my last candlestick, and have ordered it to be served up to them (and forty more friends) in the shape of fifty ragouts, and as many *fricassees*. I make a short life and a merry, and if these Johns, when they return home, do not do honour to my hospitality, why truly I must be bold to say that their hearts are not so good as their stomachs. Tell Lord Suffolk that his young cousin, Mr. Cecil, is here, and behaves extremely well. To say the truth, I have great honour by my present batch of countrymen, and they are perfectly well received from the *top* to the bottom of Austria. Lady Mary Coke sent me a gold snuff-box t'other day, as a present, because I had been civil to her here. I suppose you would not be sorry if I took the

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same method of acknowledging the civilities I have met with in South Audley Street; but I'm not such a noodle neither, my dear lord. I have heard you say, as a lesson to your sweet babes, that he who pays in gold for *past* favours is a blockhead; so you see I have learnt something by living in your lordship's company. There 's a Mr. Rigby, too, in the world, who conferred sundry obligations upon me—but you know I have a right to forget them, as they are *at least a twelvemonth old.* But here come half a score of Etonians. I must lay you aside till to-morrow, and then you shall know the state of the Polish delegation, and the latest accounts from the siege of Silistria.

Good bye, dear Brad.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, August 29th, 1774.

I HAVE a better excuse for my silence of some weeks than you, perhaps, are aware of; for after doing the honours of Austria to all the rising generation of Great Britain, and showing to my old patron, Mr. Conway, that affectionate welcome he had a right to expect from my deep-rooted gratitude, I set out upon a very active as well as pleasant ramble through Hungary. That kingdom, though one of the most fertile in Europe, and rich in those paltry metals which damn mankind, is in many respects so unlike the countries that surround it, that in two days' journey from hence, I thought myself already removed to the other side of our terraqueous globe; and the more so, as with my *ten languages,* I could make never a one of the six nations which inhabit Hungary comprehend a word I said.

These inhabitants have been brought together by all the strange accidents of twenty emigrations, and as

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many civil wars; and some of these hordes, coming from the Chinese wall, some from the White Sea, some from Saxony, and others from Scandinavia, and even Rome—their having scratched the surface of the earth (for their agriculture is no better) for some centuries, under the same dominion, has not been a sufficient reason for mixing their breeds, or moulding down their opposite peculiarities into one uniform national character. Their dress, language, religion, and manners, still savour strongly of their distant origin; and if I had been a philosopher instead of a plenipo, I might have reaped more advantage from the contemplation of this hodge-podge of humanity, than I have hitherto done in my visits to all the refined nations of Europe; who, bating the cut of a coat, or the curl of a wig, have a tiresome sameness in every feature and opinion, which blunts the curiosity of a traveller.

Instead of turning my journey to this liberal purpose, I went (*like a blockhead*) into the very bowels of the earth to learn to know gold and silver in all their disguises; and to see how they are torn thence by the stubborn hands of a set of men who voluntarily abandon the sight of the sun, to feed the avarice of others, and agree to content themselves with black bread and onions, in order that some gentlemen whom they never saw may keep race-horses. This is very strange, my dear Brad, and the first man who said to a fellow-creature, "go into that dog-hole, and starve industriously in digging out some gold, that I may spend it"—was indeed a very impudent scoundrel!

And what do you think of a *Keith* going into that same hole with much pains and trouble, to see whether a blue stone, or a grey stone, produces that gold which he despises, and would not purchase by the sacrifice of one single crotchet of sentiment? Yet this have I been doing for some days together; and if I had not

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distributed all the money in my pocket amongst these miserable *gold-finders*, I should have been afraid at last that my principles had been tainted by the study of metallurgy! Luckily for my philanthropy, the surfaces of those hills, (which are thus ransacked for precious curses) are inhabited by a set of simple Sclavonians, or Vandals; who, amidst the most romantic of all earthly situations retain an originality of character, and a rudeness of manners, which show that the interior of their mountains has happily been carried very far away from them.

But I am writing a dissertation instead of a letter; and I don't think that is either to your purpose or mine. Well! now to the rest of my Journal. From these hills, whence the sinews of war are extracted, I went to the Imperial camp at Pesth, to see in what manner and by what weapons, God's creatures may be swept off the face of the earth in the most effectual and expeditious method. I saw ten thousand men on foot, and nearly as many on horseback, who, if the field be wide enough, and the day long enough, will cheerfully undertake to exterminate twice their number of any given nation under the sun. This, you know, my dear Brad, was a mighty clever sight after the other gold story; and I naturally inquired whether the entrails of the mountains were not distributed in handfuls amongst these hardy executioners. I found, to my astonishment, that the art of killing Christians is practised in this country, at so cheap a rate, that each of these heroes, I had just admired, thought his labour amply repaid by twopence halfpenny a day, and a crust of dry bread into the bargain. This afforded me a fresh lesson of morality, and my love of mankind would have undergone a second shock, if I had not observed that these fire-eating gentry were as sober and orderly a set of people in their private life as any I had ever met with.

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August 30th.

I have sent Mr. Conway to the King of Prussia's camp at Breslaw, from whence he will proceed to take a second touch of the Austrians at Prague, and after all this we shall see him again for a day or two at Venice, on his way to Paris. Our German newspapers have proved that Mr. Conway has been signing treaties, and forming alliances at every Post-house upon the road since he left England; but I (poor devil!) know *nought* of the matter, and am bought and sold in the political market like an Essex calf in Smithfield. Remember, I tell you, I am answerable for no treaties but those I set my name to; and I enter my caveat against the supposition of my having had any hand in the late Turkish peace, which is, indeed, the most prodigal piece of parchment that has been blotted by any Mussulman since the days of Mahomet. Did I ever tell you how much I like your young Stanley? He is a very lively, good-humoured, gentlemanlike young fellow as any I know; and behaved with great propriety in a sort of *incog* visit I advised him to make to the Emperor's camp in Hungary. Stanley has a strong vocation for the military, and I wish his friends would set him afloat in that channel betimes. Young Edmonstone was likewise of the party, and you may tell Lord Fred that I show him kindness for his own sake as well as that of his family. My saucy younkers are indeed above the common standard, and I flatter myself none of them will be the worse for their stay in Vienna. My city will get into vogue by their report of it, and I shall be *ruined*, but what of that?—a beggarly Scotchman set upon a prancing horse must needs ride to the devil. I pity poor Lord Egremont for his uncle's negligence in not making a will to leave his fortune away from him. It does not happen once in a century that riches bring happiness and contentment along with them.

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But there is an exuberance of wealth in the case of Lord Egremont which may go nigh to exclude these blessings entirely. I do not think, my dear Brad, that there is any chance of your ever being exposed (any more than myself) to that calamity. We have no Irish or Scotch uncles who may *heedlessly* overwhelm us with a torrent of riches.

Within these eight-and-forty hours I have received with infinite pleasure your two kind letters, and I thank you for them in the abundance of my heart. What a pity that your sea voyages, your Saltash trip, and all your patriotic labours as Lord Mayor, should have brought you a return of your nasty ague? Men of your stamp should have a patent for plunging into all sorts of dissipation with impunity. I am glad, however, to see by your latest epistle that you have so far recovered health and spirits as to be able to do the honours of the Isle of Wight, and Fawley, and Quarley, and the other distant country-seats to the amiable and friendly clan of the Cornwalls. You wish the Knight of Denmark were of the party. Alas! my dear Lord! his Excellency is grown such a methodical clockwork sort of a courtier, that you might reap as much pleasure from the society of one of the Chinese figures in Cox's museum, as from that of the quondam facetious Sir Bob. There is no fire in the brain of man which a diplomatic extinguisher will not smother effectually in a short term of years. I hope and believe that the warm affections of the heart are not so easily quenched, and that, indeed, is my only comfort.

A letter I had from my sterling Lord Suffolk by Pisani, (and such a letter!) has administered more comfort, and more intense satisfaction to every exquisite feeling of my inward man, than any words can express. Poor dog as I am, I would not barter that letter against a swingeing pension for life upon your kingdom of

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Ireland. You may tell my Lord Suffolk from me that he never bestowed a sheet of paper to better purpose since he was born, as I know that his humane purpose was to make me happy. I have told you twenty times, and now repeat it with infinite gratitude, that no human being this day upon earth ever had so many striking proofs of genuine friendship, and disinterested kindness, showered upon him by his fellow-creatures, as I have had from the cradle to this hour. Ask yourself,—ask Lord Suffolk, and Rigby, and the Drummonds, and the Amhersts, and the *Gang*, and all their wives and daughters, if I over-rate my good fortune; and, if I have not the fairest title to talk enthusiastically of the virtues of human nature?

This romantic exclamation may, in the opinion of every member of *Almack's*, or the *Savoir-vivre*, be downright nonsense; but it is the nonsense which serves me for food and raiment, and in the enjoyment of which I shall live and die. I don't like the last news from America any more than your worship; but we have good men and true at the head of everything, and he must be a shallow politician who expects that so many topsy-turvy heads can be set right afresh without a deal of pains and perseverance. Pray, God love you, my dear Brad, let me know now and then a little of the true state of things there; for I should get into low spirits about that very interesting business, if I were left entirely to public newspapers, and popular clamour.

Adieu, yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. BRADSHAW.

Vienna, September 15th, 1774.

I HAVE been hurried off my legs these last three weeks with running backward and forward from capi-

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tals to camps, and initiating my young Johns in all the rites of Mars and Venus. On Sunday last, this courtly campaign was concluded by a most delightful show, the description of which would do honour to the pen of Sir William Chambers. The ladies of the court, with all their diamonds and danglers, were marshalled in their gayest attire, under a sumptuous pavilion, on the summit of a romantic hill, which commanded an extensive view of a charming country.

This hill was fortified in the slight manner of a temporary post for a small army, and during several hours of the finest afternoon that was ever seen, the hill was surrounded, invested, and attacked in form, by three different corps of blooded-minded foes, who arrived by forced marches from Turkey, Bohemia, and Italy, to make the second chapter of the Rape of the Sabines. The little chosen band charged with the defence of the dear creatures, performed wonders, and (contrary to the rules of your countrymen,) defended the place by *inches;* yet, at length, overpowered by numbers, and drenched in blood, they were forced to capitulate in the centre of the fortress; and by an effort of magnanimity, which does honour to the generous victors, they showed their own gallantry, and their respect for our's, by allowing us to retain, and carry off, all our damsels, unruffled in a hair of their head-dresses.

It was a noble day, Master Brad, and I flatter myself that our ladies from their pavilion, did so much execution in the eye-shot way, as left the conquerors no mean impression of their charms and discipline. General Clinton, and Lord Thomas, who were just arrived from the Turkish wars, declared that they had seen nothing half so hot in the fields of Silistria, as this last scene of our Luxemburg campaign; and, if it had not been for the ice-creams and lemonade, which were poured down our dusty throats during the heat of the

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engagement, not a man of us would have been able to say one tender thing to our Dulcineas for a week after. Clinton will tell you all this story better than I can, and you will get it from him soon, for he left this yesterday, intending to call at the Imperial camp at Prague for a few days, and then push home with all his budget of military adventure. I have sent a large detachment of my younkers to Prague, and am reduced to half a dozen, amongst whom is the heir of Sir Archibald Edmonstone. Your Stanley (by the bye, a very lively lad,) is gone to the Bohemian wars, but promises to come back and winter at Vienna. The two Fawkeners, alas! will arrive when all the sport is over.

September 16*th*.

I would give my best suit of gala clothes for the gift of a six months' fore-knowledge of your American affairs. You can't imagine, my dear lord, how deeply I am interested in the success of those measures, which, in my opinion, every principle of sound policy, and national dignity, dictated to our matadores upon this trying occasion. Hitherto, no voice has been heard from America, but that of the noisy brawlers for licentious democracy. There must be somewhere, in that vast continent, a set of men, who respect law, and love order. I long to hear these men speak out, and when they do, I hope, my dear Brad, that you will be their echo to my attentive ear.

The nonsense with which I am worried upon that subject, is not to be credited: and though I am not called upon to make a regular defence of the steps of government, or to foretell their probable consequences, to every idle fellow who talks of America without knowing its position upon the globe, within fifty degrees of latitude—yet for my own private satisfaction, and now and then to lay in a word where it may be

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à propos, I shall really think myself indebted to you for every scrap of solid information which can give me a just idea of what *now is*, and what may naturally *be expected there*, in time coming. A dissertation upon colonial governments and colonial parties, is what I neither expect nor wish from you, my dear lord; but when day-light begins to break in upon yourself, pray let a glimpse of it fall upon my dark closet. Your counteraction of the alarming report of an immense desertion among our soldiers, gives me great pleasure, and I have already made use of it to knock half a dozen lies on the head.

You judge very sagaciously in deciding that I made the Turkish peace, and defeated the French Chancellor: and when you consider that in the course of the same six weeks, I have, in concert with Mr. Conway, made four or five stout treaties of peace and commerce, and alliance, you will be forced to say that I work hard to deserve the privilege of devouring my last guinea in the service of government. I shall send home with the ratification of all the above-mentioned treaties, my humble request for a statute of bankruptcy, which I flatter myself will not be thought a presumption beyond the merit of my feeble services.

You fancy, my dear Brad, that I am joking as to the tottering state of my finances. But it is a melancholy truth that with more marks of favour conferred upon me than I ever looked for, or merited—with a more grateful and contented disposition than most people are blessed with—I find myself unavoidably verging into beggary; because my place, my principles, my duty towards the King and my countrymen, lay me under *indispensable obligations* of expense which are, from their nature and from inveterate custom, carried to a pitch which exceeds my appointments, and swallows up the last shreds of my private fortune. I live amongst

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great Austrian lords, whose tables are costly and splendid, and ambassadors from great courts, whose appointments are at least the double of mine. I neither cope with, nor ape any body in magnificence; but the minister of England in the first court in Europe, must live not only hospitably, but handsomely, especially if he has frequently a score of young fellows of the first fashion of his country to introduce into the best company of the capital.

This is not a representation or a remonstrance, my dear Brad, but a plain matter of fact which I lay before you in the same frank good humour that I do every thing that concerns me nearly; and I promise you, at the same time, that I have not at this moment a shadow of a *grievance* in my mind, and that I shall go on cheerfully till I have melted the last of my dirty acres in Tweeddale, and then, (with that gaiety and openness which my friends have a right to expect from me) I shall say to my worthy superiors, "Here honesty bids me stop short, I have no more guineas of my own to dispose of, I cannot stoop to eat my butcher's beef without knowing for certain that he is to be paid for it; you must help me, or have done with me." Well, what do you say to my speech? Don't you think it will be pretty much of a piece with the rest of my conduct? I am very sure of one thing, that it will neither hurt nor surprise any of the honest men whom I have the happiness to call my friends as well as superiors.

If I had the opportunity, or (to call it by a juster name) the *levity*, of running away from the expense as well as cares of my profession every now and then, and spending a year or two at a time in diplomatic labours at my *father's fireside*, all might be well, and my finances recover their pristine plumpness through downright *indolence*. But I have a something about

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me which is averse to this method of recruiting; and, right or wrong, I have never once asked a leave of absence, either as a military man or a minister, during the twenty-seven years I have had the honour of serving his Majesty; and for no other reason but that my mind told me I had something to do in the precise station allotted to me. I don't know how the deuce I got up to the ears in this long story of the rise and progress of my poverty!

Oh! here comes a post from England, and your honour's letter of September 2nd. I do think, my dear lord, that you make as comfortable a plum-pudding of this transitory life as any gentleman I know. You have Mrs. Brad and the brats, with all the *heaps* of home enjoyments for the great ingredients; you have suet and marrow in courtly occupations and luncheon offices; you have plums and currants in abundance from the county of Cornwall; eggs, salt, and seasoning in a set of excellent companions, and I, poor dog, am the glass of Old Nantz that you *souse* into the midst of the composition, to make it sit light upon your stomach, and save you from heart-burnings. Why faith, this is no bad receipt of your's, my lord, and in these worst of times, I should be very glad if each of my bosom friends had as wholesome a mess in his private corner. But there lives but one Brad in a century; and if every one were to aim at being a mayor and a member, and a lord and a senator, and a sylvan swain, and all in *perfection*, as your worship does, the world would not be wide enough to hold half a score of you.

In the course of the last two months, I have seen you trotting down philosophically to Squire Rigby's along with Lord Suffolk, there to solace in the very quintessence of good society and exquisite cheer.

I have seen you return to your royal castle at

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Hampton Court, there to revel in lawful joys, and astonish the county with your hospitality. I have seen you bamboozling a borough at Saltash, and drowning common sense in port and politics as Mr. Mayor, and then dancing yourself into health and stomach again in leading up the ball with the buxom wives and daughters of your constituents. I have seen you flying like a comet over half the island, and dipping luxuriously into the sweets of all the companies you illuminated, at Fawley, Quarley, and fifty other country seats. I have had a peep of you in a snug and peaceful eclipse at Hendon; and now you are packing up, bag and baggage, plums, almonds and all—to hasten to the prettiest hermitage in the most delightful of all islands, there to sip in genteel ease the very cream of all earthly beatitude.

Why, Sir, there is enough of substantial happiness in these very two months, to be spread out by a reasonable man into plaisters for every sore of a life of threescore and ten years. And yet I'll lay fifty pounds that in less that six months, we shall see you moping in some dark corner, swearing at the miseries of human existence, and wondering how any thinking being can look for pleasure on this side of Eternity. You are a sad dog, Master Brad, a thankless fellow towards the prodigality of Providence, if ever you let a single hint of despondency or low spirits drop from your lips. Remember I tell you so, and, by Heavens, I'll prove it to the world too, if ever I hear one word more of your whining! I wish to the Lord, you could only taste of my daily mess of porridge! It may be wholesome, and it is dressed in the newest fashion; but as to salt, pepper, or toothsomeness—it has, indeed, as little of it as you can possibly suppose in the milk pap of one of your sucking babes of six weeks old. Aye! and it all goes down with poor Keith, and *cheerfully* too! for his great

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talent lies in fitting his stomach for the food that is to fill it. My love to Lord Suffolk, Rigby, and all your companions. I love you much for the virtues that belong to you; but I would give the world for a six weeks' trial of your vices.

Adieu, my dear Brad,

R. M. KEITH.

A melancholy interest is attached to the above letter; both as being the last of a humorous nature, which, for many months, (in consequence of the death of his father, before so fully adverted to,) Sir Robert Keith addressed to any correspondent whatever, and still more as being the last probably ever received from him by his unhappy friend; the termination of whose life, (Walpole hints by his own hand,) took place not many weeks after the dispatch of the very letter, enumerating those very fortunate circumstances in his lot in life, on which, Sir Robert, in reply, (and not without a benevolent purpose,) intentionally dwells.

Every one who has followed the correspondence, must have observed, even amid its occasional playfulness on the part of the favourite of fortune, in whom the world saw merely an object of envy, and whom the virulence of faction often singled out as the mark through whom to wound his powerful patrons, the Dukes of Bedford and Grafton—a morbid tendency to mental gloom (consequent apparently on the physical depression of a complaint more common then than now in England), frequently alluded to by Sir Robert, as his "nasty ague"—during a paroxysm of which the rash act must have been committed, which wrung his friend's heart with painful surprise, and left an amiable wife and children bereaved of a kind and affectionate parent.

And here it is impossible to forbear remarking on the many traits of high and generous sentiment, as well

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as good feeling, and domestic virtues scattered over the correspondence; which (not to mention the conclusive proof resulting from the attachment of a distinguished circle of the first men in England, and the warm friendship of a man like Sir Robert Keith, himself the soul of honour and integrity) may serve to redeem, from the aspersions cast on it by the malignity of party, the character of one, of whom the same Junius who gave it as his solemn deliberate opinion that the great Earl of Mansfield was the "worst man that ever existed on the face of the earth," only spoke disparagingly, as of a too successful placeman.

END OF VOL. I.

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1849.

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

(OFFICIAL AND FAMILIAR)

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH, K.B.,

ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY AT THE COURTS OF DRESDEN, COPENHAGEN, AND VIENNA, FROM 1769 TO 1792.

WITH A MEMOIR OF

QUEEN CAROLINA MATILDA OF DENMARK,

AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVOLUTION THERE IN 1772.

EDITED BY

MRS. GILLESPIE SMYTH.

Letters—the living thoughts of a race departed; the record of their playful humours and buoyant fancies, their fresh, cordial, overflowing love! . . . . We go through the world, blaming its coldness, and cursing its cruelties, and its crimes; but all unconscious of the vast riches of joy, and intellect, and affection, which hem us in on all sides, and overflow continually into the Eternal Sea. Thanks be to an all-gracious God, who has caused them to flow!—HOWITT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

OF

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

AMONGST the most interesting as well as distinguished of Sir R. M. Keith's familiar correspondents was the celebrated Marshal Conway, better known, perhaps, to the reader of modern times from the letters and memoirs of Horace Walpole than from the conspicuous part which his talents, and, still more, his rare integrity, assigned to him in the military and political history of his time. He was the second son of Francis first Lord Conway; Secretary in Ireland during the viceroyalty of the Duke of Devonshire; Secretary of State in 1765; Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance in 1770; Commander-in-Chief in 1782; and a Field-Marshal in 1793.

Of the chivalric character by which, in early youth, this delightful man was distinguished, and which accompanied him, not only to the field of fame, but through all the crooked politics of a factious period, we find abundant traits in the letters of Horace Walpole.* He thus writes in May, 1745:—

* Of Conway, Walpole, so generally depreciatory of every one, says, "In an age wherein honesty could boast but of few genuine martyrs, Conway

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"My Dear Harry,

"As gloriously as you have set out, yet I despair of seeing you a perfect hero! You have none of the charming violences which are so essential to that character. You write as coolly, after behaving well in a battle, as you fought in it. Can your friends flatter themselves with seeing you, one day or other, be the death of thousands, when you wish for peace in three days after your first engagement;* and laugh at the ambition of those who have given you this opportunity of distinguishing yourself? With the person of an Oroondates, and the courage, you have all the compassion, the reason, and the reflection of one who never read a romance. Can we ever hope you will make a figure, when you only fight because it was right you should, and not because you hated the French, or loved destroying mankind? This is so un-English, so un-heroic, that I despair of you!"

Of the person in which this lofty, yet "tender and kindly" soul was appropriately enshrined, Walpole gives, in a supposed fragment of romance, the following description: "Elmedorus was tall and perfectly well made, his face oval, his features regularly handsome, but not effeminate; his complexion sentimentally brown, with not much colour; his teeth fine, and forehead agreeably low, round which his black hair curled naturally and beautifully. His eyes were black too, but had nothing fierce or insolent, on the contrary, a certain melancholy swimmingness, that described hopeless love,

was certainly the most distinguished. He never ceased to attest his attachment to virtue at the risk of a most precarious fortune; and he had one merit that added to the beauty of his character, and in which he was singular, that he never mixed party or faction with his line of conduct."

* The battle of Fontenoy, in which Mr. Conway greatly distinguished himself. This vehement wish for peace, characterised through life one who was nevertheless often styled a "born warrior."

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rather than a natural amorous languish. His exploits in war have endeared his memory to all admirers of true chivalry, as the mournful elegies which he poured out among the desert rocks of Caledonia,* will ever preserve his name in the flowing annals of poesy."

In 1749 he thus writes:—

"In the church of Chenys, Mr. Conway put on an old helmet we found there. You cannot imagine how it suited him, how antique and handsome he looked; you would have taken him for Rinaldo."

The next extract, in 1755, thus compliments him in the new field of politics, as Irish Secretary:—

"Never make excuses for a letter that tells one as many agreeable things as your last; that you have accommodated all your politics to your satisfaction, and may I be allowed to say, greatly to your credit. What could you tell me that would please me so much? You have tranquillised a nation, have repaired your master's honour, and secured the peace of your administration."

To Mr. Conway's domestic happiness with the Countess of Aylesbury (daughter to the Duke of Argyle, whom he had married in 1748) we have the following, among many agreeable allusions, in a letter to this lady, written in 1760, from the celebrated *Manor of Whichenovre*.

"Well, Madam! If I had known where I was coming, you and Mr. Conway should have come with me. Do you know, this is the individual manor-house where married ladies may have a flitch of bacon upon the easiest terms in the world? I should have expected the owner would be ruined, and that the park would be stocked with hogs instead of deer. On the contrary, it

* Mr. Conway was then (Oct. 1746) in Scotland, where he had accompanied the Duke of Cumberland, as his aide-de-camp. On some love verses he had sent from thence, Walpole makes the remark (characteristic of the temper of the times) that "no Scotchman was capable of such thoughts, though a Scotch *woman* might inspire them."

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is thirty years since the flitch was claimed, and Mr. Offley was never so near losing one as when you and Mr. Conway were at Ragley. Are you not ashamed, Madam, never to have put in your claim? I have a great mind to take my oath on your behalf, that neither of you would, if at liberty, prefer anybody else—'*ne fairer, ne fouler,*' and I could easily get twenty persons to swear the same. Therefore, unless you wish to convince the world that your apparent harmony is a counterfeit, you must send me a letter of attorney to claim the flitch in your name. But you had better, if you love a prospect, or bacon, come in person, for you will see a little paradise, the more like the antique one, that (by what I have said) married couples are driven out of it."

The effects of his hero's safety (after one of the battles in Germany in 1761) on the heart not usually *too* sensitive of Walpole, will give an idea of its value to his friends in general.

"I bought the victory by two terrible hours to-day. I heard of the battle two hours before I could hear a word of Mr. Conway. I sent all round the world, and went half round it myself. I have cried and laughed, and trembled and danced. I will now preach at Paul's Cross. In short, I am serious in the height of all my joy. God is very good to you, my dear Madam; I thank him for you, I thank him for myself; it is very unalloyed pleasure we taste at this moment. My heart is so expanded, I could write to the last scrap of my paper; but I won't."

Lest the above, to the hero's wife, should be thought exaggerated, we have this corroboration in a letter to George Montagu:—

"I think few things will make you happier than to hear that we have totally defeated the French combined armies, and that Mr. Conway is *safe*. If this victory produces a peace, I shall be happy for mankind; if not,

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I shall content myself with the simple but pure joy of Mr. Conway being safe."

To the disinterestedness of the friend thus highly valued, we have many scattered tributes, but none more heartfelt than the following. On Mr. Pitt accepting the Chatham peerage and a pension, Walpole exclaims, "Oh! my dear Harry, I beg you on my knees, keep your virtue; do let me think there is still upon earth one man who despises money!"

On another occasion, he writes to him:—

"How can one build on virtue and fame both? when do they go together? In my passion I could almost wish you were as worthless and great as the King of Prussia! If conscience is a punishment, is it not a reward too? Go to that silent tribunal, and be satisfied with its sentence."

On his friend's entrance into office in 1765, he thus writes to George Montagu:—

"You will not dislike to hear that Mr. Conway does not take the appointments of Secretary of State.* If it grows the fashion to give up about 4000*l.* a year, this ministry will last for ever."

In June, 1774, General Conway set out, on the frequent and strenuous invitations of Sir R. Murray Keith, on a tour of military observation through Flanders, Germany, Prussia, and part of Hungary. It was from this period that their correspondence (which was, as well as their friendship, of much older standing†) was most closely carried on; nearer intercourse having ripened the warmth of the feelings towards each other of such congenial spirits. One letter alone of Sir R. M. Keith's (to his father) during this period, has been preserved, giving a graphic description of the portion of this

* Having desired (on a former occasion) to hold the Ordnance without the salary, the King told him "he was a phenomenon!"

† They had served together in the Seven Years' War in Germany.

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excursion which the friends enjoyed together. Those of General Conway will speak for themselves. One or two of an earlier date, and on a different subject, will complete the picture, which other correspondents of 1773 had drawn, of the naval glories of Britain, as well as exhibit the opinions on society of one so well qualified to adorn it.

GENERAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Park Place, April 12th, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

One is seldom quite so punctual as one intends: I am not, God knows! and I too often experience the same remissness from my friends; both with regret always—but 'tis the lot of human correspondence, and one must be patient under it.

I am happy in hearing my friend Lord Stormont * is honoured as he ought to be at Vienna; it gives one a good opinion of the Viennois; and in return, I know he found the society he lived in there, very amiable. It was confined, I believe, and from that, much the more agreeable. That of London is much too diffuse; it has grown so very sensibly, in my time,† and now is a folly not confined to the grand, or *beau monde*, but circulates and pervades all orders of people, at least all quarters of the town. I was myself the other night invited to an assembly, very near the *Tower*, where we found two very genteel rooms crammed with card-tables, great caps, and maccaroni heads. In one thing they exceeded us; for, besides tea and lemonade, there was a large proportion of wine and punch constantly offering itself at your elbow, which gave me a high idea of the sociable disposition of the ladies of that quarter.

We are at this moment retired from assemblies of all

* Sir Robert Murray Keith's predecessor in the embassy.

† What would the writer have thought of modern London!

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sorts, thank God! and are enjoying, during the short recess of Easter holidays, that kind of society which, of all others, suits my taste the most; which is that of a few intimate and easy friends in the country. The Duke and Duchess of Argyle, Lady Betty, the Fitzroys, and Lord F. Cavendish are now here. Where there is ease and intimacy, there always must be mirth; in short, one's *friends*, so culled and sifted from the mass, seem a different sort of beings, and well they may, when one may taste and relish them distinctly; whereas a London assembly* is a hotch-potch, or pudding of such heterogeneous composition as leaves no distinct flavour of any kind.

You are very good to be mindful of, and to remind me of my scheme for making you a visit at Vienna; and I assure you it is more than possible it may be realised sooner perhaps than you imagine. I know few things that would give me more pleasure than accepting your kind invitation, if I do bring myself to set my foot on the Continent, which I have several temptations to do, and have long meditated. I have heard that the King of Prussia is to have a grand camp some time in June. As you are in the way of hearing this kind of news authentically, will you kindly let me know if anything is fixed.

It is now high time to release you; accept Lady Aylesbury's compliments, and believe me, with sincere regard and esteem,

Your most faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

P.S.—I am ashamed to have got through this tedious

* As a contrast to the City assembly above described, we may extract from another letter the postscript relating to a fashionable *réunion* of the same period. "Last night we had a most sumptuous entertainment at the French Ambassador's. There were places at supper for near four hundred people, and all elegantly served. The newest thing was three quadrilles, or parties of four couple each, who danced a new figure dance, well performed. They were not quite in fancy dresses, but *uniform*."

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letter without wishing you joy, as I do very sincerely, of the honourable and advantageous promotion of your brother.

In June of the same year he thus wrote, postponing till the following his intended tour:—

Park Place, June 30th, 1773.

DEAR SIR,

I am ashamed of not writing sooner, and almost equally ashamed to write. As to the first, I have all the common excuses of London, and Parliament, and business, and hurry, &c., to allege; but the true reason was, that I was meditating and in doubt about my journey. And now that I must say, alas! that I am *quasi* resolved, I am more ashamed, and more sorry by much; by which you may know what that resolution is. Don't accuse me rashly of fickleness, still less of want of the strongest inclination to execute my scheme, and particularly that part of it which regards *yourself*. But first, Lord Stormont will not be in Paris: we expect him here almost daily; next, my friend Colonel Philipps, who was to have been my companion, has some private business which prevents his going this summer. There are no French reviews, and no Prussian now to be expected; and I could add some personal matters not worth troubling you with. The result of the whole is, that the summer being so far spent, I shall defer with infinite regret the pleasure I had promised myself in seeing you till the next, when I hope nothing may occur to prevent me. I confess it is precarious always, and, therefore, doubly disagreeable to defer a thing one likes, for so many months, perhaps near a year. At a certain time of life, many distant flights are not to be aimed at. I confess I have great pleasure and amusement in them, almost the same as ever; in some respects, perhaps, more, though not exactly of the same kind. Thank God! I shall not run, or rather limp, after Opera girls,

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like poor Lord Harrington, in pink and green, nor fly after trinkets and fashions; but the solid pleasure of seeing some banished friends I love, and many countries and things worthy of a manly curiosity, are motives one need not be ashamed of at any age. Hamilton invites and tempts me strongly to push on to Naples; if I could add that to the happiness of visiting yourself and Lord Stormont, my satisfaction would be complete. All this, by an early departure next summer, I might possibly accomplish; however, should the Italian part be more *en l'air*, the other, I hope, will hardly fail. Pray don't *you* think of being in the fashion of leaving your post till next year is past; *then*, indeed, I may think it a very reasonable thing.

I am just come back from the "Voyage de Portsmouth," and with my ears and head so full of great guns, that it has almost driven every other idea out. All the details of that naval campaign you'll have heard so much of, that it would be cruel to persecute you with them; and yet, what else *can* one have to say? It was a noble and a brilliant sight, and a delightful noise and hurry. One could not help a little mischievously regretting that it was all mere show; for, if half the powder had been spent in any thing but salutes, it would probably have procured us half a dozen victories. The weather was delightful, and his Majesty pleased beyond measure. He seemed quite like a little god of the ocean; and no sooner had he enjoyed his fine weather, and the brilliant sun which for two days gilt that moving picture, than he wished for a little agitation, and lo! a squall or two came, *au point nommé!* I am told it gave his Majesty a specimen how monarchs feel when they are *sea-sick;* but I speak by mere hearsay, as it was the last day, and he spent it entirely in his yacht. I might have found some little subject of mortification, that the other element so absorbed all

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attention, and depreciated my engineering and poor little *earth*-works for defence of the Docks. His Majesty, indeed, made the tour of them, and seemed very well pleased; but few cared, or knew, or thought anything about them.

The thing was, on the whole, well imagined, and fortunately executed. A king should see his people and be seen by them; a king of a free country, at least, should not be shut up like an eastern monarch. The scene for his first excursion was well chosen; and, now he has tried his wings, I hope and dare say it will not be the last.

Adieu. I have tired you and almost myself. Believe me, with the truest regard,

Your most faithful and affectionate friend,

H. S. C.

The period for realising the interrupted projects of the former year drawing near, General Conway thus acknowledges the timely information communicated to him by Sir Robert Keith.

London, April 25th, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

I return you a thousand thanks for your intelligence of the motions of his Imperial Majesty; for you judged perfectly right in supposing him to be a principal object of my curiosity and attention; combined with what he is so much a part of, viz., his troops, and their manœuvres—certainly the first.

The time fixed for his encampments falls out luckily enough for my little projects. The King honours the Blues with his notice this year, and the day at present fixed for the review is the 6th of June. My design is to set out immediately after, and the plan of my journey is through Flanders, where I propose to see some of the French garrisons, the Austrian, as far as they lie cleverly

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in my way; but as their garrisons are thin, and I hope to see so much of their troops in another situation, I am more indifferent to that.

From Flanders, I shall go of course to pay my devoirs to our old commander, and much honoured friend, Duke Ferdinand.* This is the outline of my plan, to be filled up by such occasional excursions as the incitement of particular objects may occasion. I should like to aim both at Berlin and Saxony, if within my reach. I have heard, within this day or two, that the King of Prussia will have his grand reviews in May; if so, I doubt I must give them up, though with great regret; and in that case content myself with peeping at his person and town, which I have never seen.

Whatever advice and assistance you, who are such a citizen of the world, can give to such a *poor young traveller*, will be thankfully received; and what objects *you* point out as worthy of admiration or curiosity, will be carefully attended to.

In the meantime, I feel as I ought, the kindness of your friendly invitation. I know no sight equal to the countenance of a cordial friend. In having any way contributed to your being in the situation you hold, I have served his Majesty and the public. But, indeed, you *placed yourself where you are.* 'Tis little to put a man upon the stage if he does not know how to act there; and my small share in it is amply paid by any part in a friendship which I esteem so valuable.

Have you got Lord Chesterfield's Letters yet? Probably not, as they are very voluminous. They make some noise here, and I think will make some abroad too; especially as some ladies there are spoken pretty freely of, more so indeed than was fit for publication.

* Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, whose appreciation of Sir R. M. Keith and his Highlanders has been already alluded to.

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They are a course of letters to his son (your brother minister) for twenty-five years, from his cradle almost to his grave. Their chief purpose and plan to teach him to be a man of the world, *du bon ton*, the Lothario of the age; in which respect his lessons were, I believe, happily thrown away. They are written with a good deal of spirit, and much knowledge of the world, though I think below the pitch he would have aimed at, had he thought of publication. Pray, is not difficulty made in your *territories* about books? even what a traveller carries?

I should have mentioned to you that Lord Stormont was good enough to join us some days of the very few he passed in England. The charms of Paris do not seem to have moved his constancy from Vienna. He talks of it with the same pleasure and regret as the day he first left it. His friends there no doubt deserve his regard, and nothing is so steady as his heart appears in all its affections. They will long retain them, and value them all the more highly.

I beg you to accept of Lady Aylesbury's best compliments, and am, with the greatest truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful servant,

H. S. Conway.

The chief incidents of the actual journey may be extracted from various letters, coming as they do from the pen of so able a general, and so celebrated a man.

Arras, June 13th, 1774.

Dear Sir,

According to your desire, I write you a parting word, just to let you know that I am actually under way, and that you have marked my progress in your letter almost as exactly as I could have done myself; (I mean my plan—for you, who know the roads

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and country so much better, can in some respects more exactly;) and mine, in effect, is little more than a journey, though a circuitous one, for I shall be always on the wing. Perhaps I might do better to take more time, and see fewer places: but in general the objects of my curiosity are soon seen; and for society, I can't aim at that in this part of my tour. I reserve that for a *bonne bouche* when I shall have the pleasure of yours.

I am arrived, dear Sir, where you see, by Calais, Dunkirk, Mont Cassel, St. Omer, Aire, and Bethune. I propose going to-day to Douai, and thence to Lisle, perhaps by Bouchain and Valenciennes. I shall scarce reach Brunswick till the first days in July, and Berlin the second week, which I hope will allow me to be with you at least the very beginning of August—*sooner if possible.*

I had the pleasure of seeing your father before my departure, and can give you that of saying he seems to me to grow younger.* I know I flatter such a son as you, in telling that news of such a father!

Adieu. I am in expectation of the chief engineer, with whom I propose to see the works, and ground of Turenne's famous attack. I scribble in haste, and am

Your's most truly,

H. S. C.

Brunswick, July 9th, 1774, 5 o'clock, a.m.

. . . . . I wished to have staid some days longer here, where I have received many flattering marks of civility and attention, and I may, I think, be vain enough to say, of kindness and friendship from my old commander. They expected me to stay longer,

* Spite of which fallacious appearance, Mr. Keith only survived the interview three months.

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and I assure you it is a hard struggle with myself to get away; but I now grow doubly impatient. I go from hence to Zell, for I *must see your Queen*, and should have given up that journey with much regret; though I am alarmed with an account that the Emperor's motions will be sooner, and that I may lose the opportunity of seeing him before he sets out, which would be the greatest disappointment. The Duke of Brunswick communicated this to me; but, as the letter was not direct from Vienna, and your account remains uncontradicted, I have some hopes it may be a mistake. I should be glad, if possible, to have a letter from you at Dresden.

I have made such a long one of my doubts and distresses, that I have neither left myself room or time for any account of my journey. In general, it has answered at least up to my expectation, and in one respect beyond it, and surprised me; that is, the state of the fields of battle I have seen, and the great conformity of the ground in its present state with the plans and descriptions.

Dresden, July 21st, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

You desire to be informed of my progress, and I have already let you know it, after I was advanced to Brunswick. Potzdam and Berlin turned out, I think, just what you had told me I should find them: the finest, showiest towns I ever saw, by much; but so entirely outside, so unnaturally and artificially fine, and so blended with inside meanness and emptiness, as to give the whole an air of ridicule. When you see fine houses inhabited by fine people, it has an air of grandeur and beauty. When a barber or a shoemaker inhabits a palace, the whole is ridiculous. The singular rage the King has for this manner of building, and the immense sums he spends in it, are among the

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miracles of Frederick the Second. His palace, however, is noble as well as wonderful. That he should, besides all these towns, build such a palace after such a war, is a wonder; that he should build it in three years, among his miracles. I think this palace, as I said, very noble: and, though not in the purity of Italian, or even French taste, you, as I remember, undervalue and condemn it too severely.

I staid three days at Potzdam with much entertainment, for good part of which I am obliged to your excellent old friend, Lord Marischal, who showed me all the kindness and civility possible. He stopped me as I passed, and not only made me dine with him that day, but in a manner live with him. He is not at all blind, as you imagined; so much otherwise, that I saw him read a difficult hand I could not easily decipher, without spectacles.

I saw his Prussian Majesty the day after my arrival, and had, as you imagined, a most gracious reception; having been honoured with an audience of near half an hour, which he carried on with an ease and politeness much beyond what I had been taught to expect. I staid but a day at Berlin, that city being, as you said, mere outside. I saw nobody but Monsieur Barnier, and the Austrian and Palatine Ministers, who were extremely polite and attentive; which I owe, I believe, to your letters.

I have experienced the same from Monsieur Millequet, on my arrival here, which is only of to-day. My plan is, at present, to set out on Monday at farthest, if I *can have seen all here* by that time, and I hope to be with you by the 31st. I was in hopes of a letter from you here, but console myself with the thoughts of seeing you so soon, and am, in the mean time,

Most sincerely yours,

H. S. C.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. KEITH.

Vienna, September 3rd, 1774.

DEAR FATHER,

I sit down to give you some account of our Hungarian expedition, which, by the fineness of the weather, the hospitality of the inhabitants, the beauty of the country, and the variety of curious objects, turned out highly to Mr. Conway's satisfaction and mine. After seeing the castle of Presburg (which, since your time, is greatly enlarged, as well as elegantly furnished), we went to Landschutz, a seat belonging to your old friend Quinquin, now Chancellor of Hungary. The situation is extremely pretty, and no English garden was ever better gravelled or better kept than this one. He offered to go thither himself to do the honours, but as I had protested against that trouble, his servants received us with every possible attention, and we saw a very handsome house, and a mighty pleasant place, as our evening's amusement. We afterwards slept at Tirnau, and next day we quitted the post-road, and were served by peasants' horses as far as Schemnitz. I should tell you, that by an order given in the country we were to traverse, the viscounts and magistrates of the districts were directed to give us every sort of assistance, which indeed they did with a readiness and cordiality which had a kinder principle than that of obedience.

At Schemnitz, the director-general of the mines received us as he would have done a prince of the blood, carried us every where himself, explained everything, fed us sumptuously, and made us as well acquainted with the bowels of the earth in ten hours, as other people have been in as many months. The mines have nothing either dangerous or disagreeable in their access, and we passed a considerable time in examining the

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work which is actually carrying on in the great mine, one level gallery of which is ten thousand toises in length, and pierces the great hill from one side to the other.

We saw all sorts of engines, and all sorts of ores. Mr. Conway's wish of going down eleven hundred toises in a leathern bucket* was indulged without the least inconvenience or risk; and I should have followed his example by the same conveyance, if the time had permitted. We saw all the different kinds of stone which contain the metals carried through all the various processes of pounding, melting, separating, and refining, and within an inch of the coining; but that concluding operation was reserved for the mint of Cremnitz, whither we went next day, through a most delightful and romantic country.

At Cremnitz they had prepared three furnaces, and we saw the same processes upon the great scale which had been shown us the day before in miniature; and we afterwards coined our bits of gold into the actual and sterling stamp of Cremnitz ducats. With a great deal of curiosity, and an equal share of activity, I may say that we *explored everything*, and that everywhere we found our pains amply repaid by pleasure and instruction. We returned to Schemnitz through a chain of wild and woody hills, where every step produced a new and striking landscape. The rivulets which water the narrow vallies at the bottom, carry down from the heights no inconsiderable quantity of gold dust, and several thousand people (with the assistance of pounding mills, and many other curious machines) are employed

* In allusion to this, Walpole writes to Conway, "I did not think you so like the rest of the world as to go in search of gold and silver mines. The favour of Courts and smiles of Emperors have corrupted even you, and perverted you to a nabob. Have you brought away an ingot in the calf of your leg? What abomination have you committed?"

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in washing the mud and powdered stones, to extract that precious metal.

The town of Schemanitz is a fine scrambling sort of a place, which seems to have been scattered by a mixture of taste and chance, along the sides of several hills. The inhabitants are Hungarians, Germans, Slavi, Vandals, &c., and their number, in that parish alone, amounts to twenty-seven thousand. We took our leave next day of our hospitable miners, and after passing through some inferior gold-finding habitations, we got again into the wide plains of Hungary; and were again accompanied by the gentlemen of the country, who loaded us (and gratis, too, in spite of all our endeavours,) with meat, fruit, wine, and kindness, even to the utmost extent of their territory, at the ancient city of Gran. There we got once more into the post-road, and reached the camp at Pesth next day, where his Imperial Majesty arrived a few hours after us.

The corps of troops we saw manœuvre were in excellent order, and complete discipline, and consisted of ten regiments of cavalry, and eleven battalions of Hungarian infantry. The distinguished condescension with which the Emperor was pleased to receive us, the kindness which we experienced during our stay from Duke Albert of Saxony, the Prince of Mecklenburgh, the Generals Lacy, Laudohn, &c., were far beyond what we had any right to expect; and this military part of our journey was to the full as satisfactory in every point as the former had been.

You know that the town of Pesth, and the ancient capital Buda, stand upon the two opposite banks of the Danube. In the latter of the two cities (the situation of which is truly noble) there are many curious remains of the Turkish religion and manners, as they were in possession of it for almost two centuries, and did not lose it till the year 1686. This present Empress has

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built a very handsome palace, upon the hill which commands the river and both cities. The country from hence, lower down into Hungary, is a wide expanse of plain for hundreds of miles, and neither very rich nor populous.

After four days' stay at the camp, I returned to Vienna, by Raab, Comorrn, &c., and Mr. Conway joined me by appointment, on the Friday following, at Presburg, to see the famous automaton, which (as you may have read in every newspaper of Europe) plays at chess without the help of any visible agent, without any persons being concealed *in* or *near it*,* and with all the variety of complex motions which that game comprehends in playing the pieces, removing them, &c., &c. The automaton beat Mr. Conway one game, and was beat the second, in the presence of fourteen others of our countrymen, whose curiosity had brought them from Vienna to meet us. There is no telling you how strange a thing this automaton is, nor how very perfect in all its operations. If the loadstone be the principle of its movements, it is at least so well concealed that there is no guessing at the secret; and I am assured that magnets, and bars of iron, have been brought on purpose to counteract its motions, without having produced that effect. It is a gentleman of the name of Kempeln, who invented this machine to amuse the Empress, and to outdo Monsieur Pelletier, the disciple of Comus; and I have never met with any body who pretended to explain this invisible agency. The automaton had been dismounted for some years, because, I suppose, it took up too much of the gentleman's time; but he put it in order at my particular request, and showed it with great good humour, and without the least charlatanerie. He

* After mystifying all Europe for half a century, it has recently been ascertained that a concealed agent was in the machine, passing from compartment to compartment, as the interior was ostensibly shown.

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says, that whenever he has leisure, he will undertake something of machinery still more extraordinary.*

Mr. Conway staid but one day at Vienna, and then set out, post-haste, for the Prussian camp at Breslaw, from whence he goes to the Imperial camp at Prague, and is to meet me about the 20th of this month, at Austerlitz, in Moravia, near which place there is likewise to be an encampment. We shall return together to Vienna, and there he will bid us adieu, and set out by Munich and Strasbourg for Paris. I hope that he will carry home many agreeable recollections from hence, as well as many proofs of that affectionate gratitude which I owe to him.

And now, dear Sir, I fancy you are almost tired of this rambling journal, which has carried me almost to the end of my immense folio, without any mention of your numerous friends here, whose inquiries after you are at all times equally affectionate. Every body you love is in perfect health. Your presents have been received, and delivered to Prince Kaunitz, and he seemed much pleased both with the presents, and the remembrance of the donor. I have only room to assure you, dear Sir, of my warmest duty and affection, and to offer love to the Hermits, and all friends.

R. M. K.

After the separation above alluded to, and which both friends had expected to be temporary, Mr. Conway thus writes:—

Prague, 11th September.

Dear Sir Robert,

I return you a thousand thanks for your letter and intelligence; though, as it lessens, I doubt, my prospect of seeing you so soon as I always wish, I find it hard to be equally obliged. I have taken no final

* The celebrated piano-forte playing automaton.

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resolution upon the subject, because I have not the courage to say to myself, "I will not go to see you and my friends at Vienna when it is in my power." Yet, on the other side, I say, "Why go to Vienna only to take leave, and add to the regret I always feel in parting with people in whose company I had so much pleasure?" Could I stay any tolerably comfortable time, I would fly to you. . . . I got in time to my Breslaw camp through all impediments, but barely so, and as it were, to a moment. I was five nights out of the last six, from Pesth, without going to bed; having only tasted repose a few hours in the charming green bed; but that was little. I expected the camp at Breslaw, having never heard of any other name.

But behold! when I came there, I was told it was four German miles off, at a place called Schmelwitz; that the King had left Breslaw, was gone there, and would probably begin his manœuvres the next morning, at four or five.

It was now evening; I found out your friend, Count Zinzendorff, who confirmed it all; it was at that very place, a small village, the quarters in it all probably taken up, and not the *idea* of a public-house! Here was I, then, without quarters, without horses, not knowing whom I was to find, or how I should be introduced. However, there was but one way, which was to go on; so I got hacks to ride, ordered my chaise, and at twelve at night (a very bad and dark one) issued forth in quest of a camp, twenty miles off, I hardly knew where.

At Schmelwitz, however, we arrived, most punctually, before five. But instead of a camp, or head-quarter, and the King directing his manœuvres, found ourselves in the midst of a little dirty village, empty, dead, no soul stirring, no guard, no sentinel, no appearance of a head-quarter, not the idea of a camp; all seemed

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vanished like a vision. As soon as a living thing was found, we asked if that was Schmelwitz, the King's head-quarter? "Yes." "Where he lodged?" They pointed to a farm-yard. "Where was General Lentulus?" They showed a little mud-walled cottage close by us. In short, we found General Lentulus, and in a moment the enchantment, and with it all our distresses, vanished. He received me exactly as I could have wished; I was in such a sumptuous quarter as his own in five minutes. The King expected me, and had mentioned me several times. He was to see the troops march into camp that morning, but not till eight o'clock. At eight he came out, saw all his troops march in for three hours in a constant heavy rain, without a great-coat, his attendants all the same, and we dripped too in complaisance; and what was worse, after being wet as drowned rats, we went to attend his general orders, and levee, for an hour and a half, *as we were*, yet nobody a bit the worse; which shows that these silly, crazy *corps* of our's, when put to it, can bear a great deal when they please; though at other times a breath of wind will give one the rheumatism. We are, however, lucky creatures, and in my particular, during this long course, extraordinarily so, for I have hardly met with another bad day when I wished for fair weather; and this one day past, the rest, during the camp, were as fine as possible, which, besides the sensible *agrément*, added a spirit and lustre to all our shows and operations, which were indeed amazingly fine, and more than answered my expectations.

Of the three succeeding days, the first was a day of review, and general exercise of the whole army; the cavalry performing several evolutions and charges, and the infantry the same in line, marching, firing, &c. Next day the army divided, and the King, with the main part, attacked a supposed van-guard of a superior

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army, in a village; first carried the village, but the enemy bringing succours, he retired, and was attacked in the rear. The last day was the attack of an army advantageously posted, on *one flank;* an action much resembling that of Lissa. On both occasions, General Anhalt commanded the enemy's forces, and really managed them, as appeared to me, with great spirit and intelligence. The troops kept an excellent order, and on the whole, the show to strangers was very striking. The moment it was over, his Majesty departed for Breslaw.

And now you'll think my story imperfectly told, if I don't let you know how his Majesty received me; on which, knowing the kind part you take in all that concerns me, I have a double pleasure in saying that it was exceedingly gracious indeed. He spoke to me every day a great deal; and, what made it more flattering and distinguished, I think I may literally say his three levees running, to *me alone*, and a great while, though several strangers of distinction were present.

The Prince Royal was also particularly civil to me; and, what was doubly flattering, told me his Majesty had a high opinion of me; which he said arose chiefly from the advantageous manner in which the Hereditary Prince and Duke Ferdinand had spoken of me. His Royal Highness made me come two evenings, and pass an hour or two at his quarters *tête-à-tête*. The first, was to drink tea; the last, he gave me a little cold supper. His manner was extremely natural, and, I thought, showed both good sense and good nature, and a knowledge of many things and people in our country which surprised me. Now there's the history of all my vanities; a considerable branch of every man's history who speaks out as I do, because I know you have goodness not only not to condemn, but even to share them.

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I am ashamed of the unmerciful volume I have written; yet a few last words and I release you. From camp I came to Breslaw, to see the town, field of battle, &c., and from thence, next day took my departure for the tour you know I meditated in Silesia, which was by Lignitz, Landshut, and Schweidnitz, Reichenbach, Silverberg, and Glatz, all sacred ground for a military foot; and in the course of it saw many scenes very interesting and extraordinary. The King has made great additions to Schweidnitz, and fortified Silverberg and Glatz at vast expense. These, added to the enormous cost of his new palace, and the building and rebuilding towns after so long and consumptive a war, are among the wonders of his reign.

Soon after I left Landshut I had an accident, which to some travellers would have appeared serious, viz., the sudden loss of my chaise and baggage; for in a moment one of those wheels I had certainly thought eternal, broke to pieces, and planted us in the middle of the road. However, not much dismayed, we got it down to the first village, and leaving it there under the care of Philippo, took a carriole at the village, packed up a couple of shirts, a book, and a map or two, and pursued our journey *comme si de rien n'était!* One day passed and no Philippo, no chaise; another, and still the same. I now despaired of seeing them before I returned to Prague, but resolved to proceed; my linen was exhausted; my breeches in holes, and (saving your presence) almost falling off. I tried to buy another pair, but in vain; and all my hopes lay in a thorough repair at Prague, when at last, just as we were departing from Glatz, in came Philippo and the chaise; in appearance vigorous and fresh as ever, and has carried us over the mountains most successfully, in trying roads I assure you!

H. S. C.

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Prague, Sept. 14th, before 6 a.m.

I HOPE by this time you have got my packet from hence. The Emperor came yesterday to dinner, and *he* tells me you are coming to the camp at Brünn, while *you* say you can't stir from Vienna. The thought of not seeing you again pains me infinitely; yet my reasoning was too good. Your exceeding friendship and kindness add to the distress of the moment, which I feel heavily. I thought, when I meditated and executed my visit to you, it would be *all pleasure*, and so it was while it lasted; but so, alas! it is, in this best of all worlds, that there is no such thing as a pleasure that has not a *sting in its tail.*

The destination of my baggage must now be as we had settled—my trunks to Nuremberg, the rest to England —music, china, pictures—our charming Emperor's picture, I must beg, may not be forgot; and pray make up my accompt faithfully, and let me pay you all I owe you. I mean all that debt which I *can* acquit. The debt of all your goodness, civility, friendship, and kind attention, for that I must own myself insolvent. I know what you are ready to say upon that, but I stick to my text!

Pray tell our good and adorable Countesses,* all that I have said on this subject is also for them. I am grieved to hear Madame de Thun has been indisposed—she is too good to be a moment so. Actually there are a certain species upon this earth (but they are rare) who seem made to be inhabitants of some much better sphere than this miserable scene of diseases, weakness, and calamity. It makes cynics of us, to see such people suffer.

I could fill pages with my regrets at not returning among you; but not only grave and sound reasons

* Mesdames de Thun and Pergen, the intimate friends of Sir R. M. Keith; the most amiable, as well as distinguished women in Austria.

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(generally the most odious counsellors in the world), but even my friendship for you itself, and my partiality for Vienna, warned me against so unsatisfactory a visit. Do not hesitate to believe this the very *inside of my heart* upon this occasion, and convey it to all who are the objects of that regret; that is, to all who were my friends because they were *yours*.

Adieu, and believe me ever dear Sir Robert's

Most affectionate and faithful servant,

H. S. C.

I believe I forgot to tell you that the King of Prussia honoured you with his compliments—what an omission!

The reader who has thus far accompanied, in his tour over the battle-fields and camps of Europe, the future Commander-in-Chief of England, as well as prominent sharer in her various administrations, will not be sorry to conclude it with his opinions on the state both of military and civil affairs in France, at a period when the events, to which subsequent experience has traced the springs of its revolution, were beginning to excite observation; though none save a prophet, perhaps, could have discerned in "the cloud as yet no bigger than a man's hand"—the fury of the coming storm.

Paris, Nov. 19th, 1774.

I HAVE just read over your letter, my dear Sir, with that mixed kind of feeling which accompanies so many of our affairs *ici bas*—pleasure and pain; pleasure to behold you in that picture of your mind, full of friendship and goodness; and pain for my own shocking negligence in letting so much kindness be so long unacknowledged. I had a little glimmering of hope that I had written to you since my arrival here, but fear it is a flattering illusion, arising from self-love and vanity, and wishes to be what I ought; and I doubt I

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must not take credit for any such letter, but only content myself with wishing that it had been so.

I am infinitely obliged to you, I am infinitely so to my friends, and yours who think of me at Vienna. There is no place where I had rather be thought of; your friends are such as you have reason to be as proud of as they are of you, and I am of both; wherefore I desire to keep up the remembrance by which I still exist at Vienna, as long as I can; but, alas! it is the work of short time, and I must expect the fate, I doubt, of those travellers, at best, who are esteemed, well treated, and at last forgotten in the crowd, by their kind hosts.

From Nuremberg, my history is rather simple and unadventurous I executed the plan I had always had in my mind for visiting the fields of action at Donawert and Blenheim. We had no military guides, but yet saw them satisfactorily. There are few *memories living* for those scenes, much less persons. But the ground and the descriptions suffice. I wanted to know a little more distinctly Prince Eugène's march to the ground, and how far his attack extended. And it seems very clear Marshal Tallard's position had a weakness by the centre, where the villages of Oberklaw and Niederklaw (the latter particularly much advanced) were ill protected; and he had unnaturally and unnecessarily crowded Blenheim with a multitude of men.

I was too late for the French reviews, as I expected; but I had an opportunity of seeing Strasbourg, Metz, and Luxembourg the more at my ease; and had all sorts of civilities and facilities from the respective generals and commandants, particularly General Wurmser at Strasbourg, and an old acquaintance, Conflans, at Metz. They are all fine, and very extraordinary places, but I don't mean to trouble you with details upon them. I passed six days at Strasbourg very well. Monsieur de Contades came there, but my chief connection was with

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Baron Wurmser, a most polite and amiable man. They showed me the garrison, what remained; only eight battalions, and they reduced to exercise as four by *séméstres et congés.* They are middling corps, and performed in a middling way (not bad, however), the newly introduced Prussian discipline. Major Borche of *Anhalt's* regiment, who was the introducer, was there, with his regiment, for one, so I conclude I saw the flower of it.

I arrived at Paris on the 19th of last month, and found my ladies settled there; but not having succeeded in finding any letters at Metz or Strasbourg, I rather prolonged my stay in that quarter, and, among other good effects of this delay, I had time to see at my ease the ground of the battle of Einsheim, and the curious spot where Monsieur de Turenne was killed; and good part of that country which had been the scene of that memorable and able campaign between him and his rival Montecuculi.

I also staid two or three days at Nanci, the prettiest town in all the world. I saw there the Regiment du Roi, which, for its manœuvres and discipline, was not perhaps very striking, but for its appearance, its ceremony, its parade, beats most I have seen. I saw them out, two battalions, and they treated me with a parade in their fine clothes. I think I never saw a prettier sight of the kind. I fell in with the officers a good deal, which gave me great pleasure, as I found them exceedingly polite. I dined with the Regiment du Roi, that is a large mess of them, joined to the Regiment de *Flandres*, whom they entertained; and afterwards with the Regiment de Champagne in the same manner. At Thionville with a regiment of cavalry. I can't say how much politeness they showed, and you know in the mere military style how agreeable these societies are, when on a good footing; theirs I admired much, as there was

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great cheerfulness, with as much order and decency as possible in a numerous company.

Here, I think, may properly end my military history, as it is now time to be in winter quarters. Yet I am not sure if it is quite finished yet, as Marshal Biron has had the goodness to show me the Depôt, or school for the guards, in all its detail, and actually ordered the regiment out one day for me to see them, which was prevented by very bad weather. The major has since told me it was only put off, but the season is so far advanced, and the ground so spoilt, I feel ashamed of giving so much trouble, and cannot think it reasonable to wish for it. We find Paris very amusing. I have made a good many civil, a great many military acquaintances, and among the most respectable, Monsieur de Castries, Stainville, d'Héronville, de Caraman, d'Ennery, (with whom I have just passed two or three days in the country) besides Marshals Biron and Soubise. We are in a very agreeable society, the spectacles are amusing; so that we have not only passed a month with pleasure, but have not as yet fixed the time for our departure. You will be surprised, perhaps, that I am not hurrying to Parliament, but you must know that I have nothing to do with it. The sudden dissolution dislocated and discomposed many election plans. I had imagined the Duke of Grafton, as he said nothing to the contrary, purposed bringing me in as before. However, he was beat at Bury, and also my brother at Coventry; there was no time for new arrangements, so here I am thrown out of that great scene of turbulence. I feel very much consoled and composed, and in my heart not displeased to have a little breathing time, and since I am here, to have an opportunity of taking more than a cursory view of this great, interesting, and curious metropolis.

We have taken a tour to Fontainebleau, and seen the Court. One must see everything; but I assure you one

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sees what is called the Court (I mean the Royal Family) here, as one sees the *lions, chez nous*. I had the misfortune to be presented to them all, and, except one word from the Queen (who could not be related to *your* charming Emperor, and not be polite), I was not honoured with one single word from one of the Royal Family. The King receives the presentations with less attention than one should naturally show to a cat or a dog, because he does not even seem to look at you.* I doubt if there is a King of Nègres or a Khan of Tartars so ridiculously uncivil. For us, who know the Emperor and King of Prussia, and who know our own King, who would speak civilly to even a French *capitain*, how strange must this appear! I saw, but the night before last, three ladies of fashion presented to a prince of the blood, who did not say one word to them, though a lady of the first distinction carried them. Yet are the people of the Court exceedingly polite; we have received the greatest civilities from them.

What say you to the *lit de justice?* and the actual recall of the old Parliament? They are recalled without new provisions or commissions—*then* the dissolution of the late King was invalid—*then* they are indissoluble—the King seems to tell them so by this recall. Yet the same King tells them, *if they refuse to exercise their functions* they shall be *ipso facto* deprived and dissolved! And he now appoints another body of men to act in their place, whose arrêts and judgments shall be conclusive. He tells them his edicts shall be laws, though they disapprove them; they may remonstrate, but *must obey*. What a constitution!

* It would be difficult to pronounce what share this singular discourtesy (arising in Louis Seize from extreme constitutional shyness) must have had in alienating from the Crown that large portion of the more recent aristocracy, as well as some of an older stamp, which, in the earlier stages of the Revolution, made common cause with the people, and by so doing, increased so materially the difficulties of the Court.

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Adieu, my dear chevalier. Accept a budget of compliments from Lady Aylesbury—the Prince of Salms sends his. Yours,

H. S. C.

P. S. I was at this extraordinary *lit de justice*, which was an obligation, owing to great politeness in the Prince de Tingres and the friendly intervention of the Prince de Beauveau; and a great one, as there were but sixty tickets, I believe, for this great hungry town and all strangers. Even our Ambassador had not one; he applied late. The scene was really fine, august, orderly, and solemn beyond expression; and all heightened, as you 'll imagine, by the importance of the occasion. The King spoke well, clearly, distinctly, and with dignity. The proceedings are not yet printed, and I hear will not till Monday, though we have expected them since last Wednesday! Adieu.

Ever cordially yours,

HENRY S. CONWAY.

[*Private.*]

THE EARL OF SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR KEITH, *Duke-street, Westminster, Nov. 8th*, 1774.

It seems to be my lot to be the messenger of bad tidings to you.*. Another unwelcome occasion calls upon me to perform this office. Poor Bradshaw died suddenly on Sunday last. I can tell you no particulars, being but this instant returned from Hampton Court, where I have passed three or four days, and I have not seen any body that by being able to satisfy my curiosity, can put it in my power to satisfy yours.† Knowing the friendship that existed

* Lord Suffolk had, two months previously, transmitted the tidings to Sir R. M. Keith of his father's death.

† If there was any truth in the asserted mode of Mr. B——'s death,

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between you and the poor man who has stolen a march upon us, I would not omit to send you this information, unpleasant as it is.

Ever since I wrote my last private letter to you, I have been constantly indisposed, more or less, with my inveterate complaint. Whenever I think I am getting a little better, more gout unexpectedly appears, and I am thrown back again. However, I am still heart-whole, and it is not bodily pain will make me otherwise.

My dear Keith, I am

Most faithfully yours,

SUFFOLK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.*

Vienna, Dec. 17th, 1774.

THERE is no balm in this world equal to that of kindness poured upon the wounds of an afflicted mind; and I solemnly assure you, my dear Chamier, that in the receipt of your friendly letter of the 24th Nov., I made a very happy trial of its efficacy. My worthy Brad was to me a treasure of cordiality, a trusty pillar of my life, upon which I leant my little cares, without scruple, and in full security. I thought myself able to render him reciprocal service in the same manner. I was proud to believe that I carried in my own breast the antidote to a very considerable part of those grievances which had beset him; I had fifty plans for the future improvement of that ascendancy which I had acquired over his heart, and all were turned to establish, in the evening of his life, and to share with him that con-

the delicacy of this, and other communications from England, left Sir R. M. K. long in ignorance of its nature; as appears from an allusion he was incapable of making, under the circumstances, to *suicide*, in a letter to his brother.

* Anthony Chamier, Esq., Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, and brother-in-law to the late Mr. Bradshaw.

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contentment and tranquillity, which his own principles and his own feelings gave him so good a right to enjoy. I forgot that at the distance of a thousand miles, the consolations of friendship are not applied to the incident and the moment, and consequently lose one half of their force and value. He has ceased to suffer, but I shall never cease to remember that in a long and intimate acquaintance, I never found him short of my highest demands, in warmth of heart, in truth, or in the most active friendship. My hearty blessing is written upon the stone which covers his ashes, and if ever a child of his can receive a pleasure or service from my best efforts, I need not say to what extent they may command them.

After two such losses* as those I have lately sustained, you will not be surprised, my dear Chamier, when I tell you that I felt myself in some measure forlorn, and that I rather hugged my grief than endeavoured to alleviate it. But, I thank God, I have friends who lead my heart, and lead it to its good. My family, my generous friend Lord Suffolk, and my indefatigable Drummonds, have lifted me up from the depression occasioned by the death of my worthy father. You, my dear Chamier, have rendered me the same service after the loss of my poor friend.

Are you able, are you heartily disposed to undertake with me an intimate, unreserved, unstudied correspondence for fifty years to come? You will do me a service beyond all price; and you, too, in a length of time, will think yourself no loser by it. You shall tell me all your rubs, and all your pleasant feelings; you shall have the best return I can make in sterling nonsense, which is my staple commodity.

In short, will you take me for better for worse, and

* Sir R. M. Keith's father had died three months previously.

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let me scold you when you are idle? If so, here goes, and this sheet of paper is the first of endless volumes. Well! what say you, is it a bargain? If you answer this letter, you must scribble on to all eternity; and about what? asks your letter now before me. Why, Master Chamier, I love to know everything. You have the wide world before you. You are already persecuted by pen and ink; you have forty thousand discontented men with red coats upon their backs, who wear out your very heart-strings; and, to be sure, your embracing an epistolary obligation with me, is entailing upon yourself an additional torment. But there is a pleasure in the variety of pain; and one thing I can assure you, which is, that the letters you receive from me shall not resemble anything you receive in black and white from any other corner of the globe; that they shall never turn upon any point of your own tedious business; shall never contain on my part the shadow of a grievance, and your answers to them may be without common sense or connexion, provided they are kind and affectionate. This, I think, makes all easy; so, as I told you before, here goes No. 1 of our joint lucubrations. I shall have no cares very soon, for I shall be without a shilling of worldly substance, and, consequently, I shall become a choice correspondent.

I am hurt to death about America; and yet I think there is such a store of honest principle and sound common sense on both sides the Atlantic, that there is no room to dread a deep and rancorous quarrel. One favourable turn, one circumstance of sterling value, and happily improved, may give a favourable bias to the whole of these transactions. I look greedily for the man and the moment, but I am too little informed to know whereabouts I *ought* to look for them. You shall be my *Cicerone* in America; and in return, if you ever should be singular enough to wish to see daylight into

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the obscure arcana of the Holy Roman Empire, I will carefully anatomise the whole of that rotten carcase for your inspection. One of the principal members of that body has engaged my ministerial officers to decide—a question at Whist! You have it here, enclosed upon a scrap of paper. Tell Dick Cox to get it *instantly* decided by the White's Club rules, and to put that decision in *five words* upon the back of the paper which you will send back to me. You see, my dear Chamier, in how many shapes the deep and active talents of a politician by profession are employed! How thrive your Austrian garden-seeds? Will you have any more of them? I am the bosom friend of the professor of botany, and we will rob the state to serve you. Adieu, my Chamier; my love to the *Gang*. I would give a thousand acres of my land, in Tweeddale, to pass one year among you.

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Jan. 21*st*, 1775.

I WOULD at this very moment give fifty pistoles for two sheets of common sense in regard to the history of John Bull and his refractory offspring in America. I am bewildered in Mr. Woodfall's lame narration, and obscure conjectures. I see rocks on all sides, and have not a glimpse of a pilot to guide me into port. You, my Chamier, shall have that office, for I am fully persuaded that the voyage must end to the advantage of all parties, though I cannot see a finger before me till the present mist is cleared up.

There is not a man of sense in Europe who does not think that the question now in agitation between Great Britain and her colonies, is one of the most important, as well as most singular, that have been canvassed for

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many centuries; but you would laugh to see how few people have any tolerable notion of that civil liberty, the bounds of which are now to be defined between mother and daughter, for the good of the whole family. The constitution of England, and the sacred energy of her laws, is, indeed, the only subject which not one foreigner amongst ten millions can comprehend with any tolerable degree of precision. I do not give lectures upon the subject, as you may well believe, my dear Chamier; but I can't help fretting now and then, when I hear a hundred decisive voices run away with a question, the very first principle of which is to them Greek and Hebrew. I hope that in a few months the firm and manly conduct of our government will produce such extensive and salutary effects, as may convince all mankind that the authority of wholesome laws is the very essence of public liberty.

January 28th.

I came to an anchor last week in the midst of this sheet, in hopes of a fresh breeze of intelligence from the best of possible islands, and yesterday brought it me in the shape of your kind and welcome epistle. Ten thousand thanks to you, my dear Chamier, for the cordial ratification of that Treaty, by which I am to be so great a gainer through life, and in the very manner that best suits my disposition and wishes. The picture you draw of my friend Anthony* is a striking likeness, though not a flattering one. I know the features of his inside much better than you imagine, and it is ten years ago that I knew him to be a man according to my own heart.

I deplore the situation of my poor Brad's family, and my only comfort, as well as their's, amid the shipwreck of their fortunes is, that they are under the guidance of

* Mr. Chamier himself.

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your truth and warm-heartedness. I feel for the distress in which it involves you; but the occasions of doing essential service to honest people are very rare; and I mistake you much, my dear Chamier, if ten years hence I do not find you in possession of a stock of recollections relative to the Bradshaw family, which both you and I shall look upon as a treasure. I am so much a stranger to the London world, that I cannot venture a word of advice concerning the eldest boy; but if you shall determine to send him to Scotland, you may command every sort of assistance I can procure him there. I would give a finger of my right hand to be able to say to myself that I had contributed to make an useful man of Bradshaw's boy. I will take up the subject with you as often as you please, and set my hand to work as heartily as you can wish.

In the last sentence of the last letter I ever had from honest Brad, he desired me to share his satisfaction at your recent inheritance. I applaud the application of it, and am clearly of opinion, that the best way to show our gratitude for the favours of Providence, or the bequests of friendship, is to draw from them every harmless species of cheerful enjoyment. Go on, therefore, my dear Cham, cut all your rooms and your domains into the precise shape that best suits your fancy; and fit me up a little snug room, with blue and white paper, and a hard bed, in one corner of your mansion. Let me alone for taking possession of it, sooner than you *think* of. Hang Lord John Murray! He may live fifty years for me, provided I am not obliged to pass two hours of them in his company. I have not a promise, or the wish for a promise of his military succession. I would not thank any man for giving me a regiment, whilst any honest fellow, my senior in service, is unprovided; and if my friends will engage to live as long as I do, they shall never hear

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me repine. Peter Taylor said my father wanted parts, and he certainly did so, if forgetting to make his sons greedy or ambitious be an unpardonable weakness. I am going to sell my thousand acres in Tweeddale, and when I am once out of debt, you shall see what a pleasant light-hearted fellow your Sir Robert shall be. But there's no being either on this side the Channel. I must get a holiday, and come amongst you for a few months to be entirely myself. The little anecdote about Lord Suffolk is to me highly flattering, and I am happy to tell *you* (once for all), that his Lordship, from the first moment of our starting in the same career, has acted towards me a part in which candour, benevolence, truth, and disinterested friendship, have so equally furnished their *quota*, that I find it hard to say whether I am more beholden to him as a man or a minister. I do not exaggerate in praising Lord Suffolk, for I speak of a heart in which I hold a place, and which never gave pain when it could with justice create a pleasure. Whenever my ragged fortunes stare me in the face, I think of my proud list of friends, and smile at poverty.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Feb. 5th, 1775.

I HAVE already that sort of impatient hankering for your handwriting which I used to have after that of my poor friend, and that, let me tell you, my dear Cham, is no indifferent proof of the cordiality I have promised you. I think next post will bring me a handsome sheet of daylight into American matters, which to me are hitherto all *mirk* and mystery. I am out of all patience with the six hundred congresses of as many ragged American villages, and I long to hear old mother

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England hold to them the language of affectionate authority and dignified firmness. I would not hurt a hair of their crazy heads, if I could help it; but I would enforce the laws with temper and moderation, in order to impress upon their memories this first salutary lesson of filial obedience. I tell you, Master Chamier, that I never despair, and I persist in affirming, that if ten good heads or warm hearts on your side the water, set about this business with steadiness and perseverance, they may succeed in spite of clamour, faction, and peevishness, wherever they may have taken root. What! would you have me to believe that John Bull is blind enough not to see the strait and fair line of his best interests, or weak enough to be wheedled or bullied out of those rights which God and common sense have bestowed upon him? I will not, and I cannot harbour such an idea! You laugh at what you call my fond expectations of the result of sound common sense on both sides the Atlantic. Why, my dear Chamier, the very occurrences of the House depose in my favour! You in England have taken the step I ventured to recommend in the first page of this epistle; and from all I hear of American matters, methinks you are in the right road. There is an old French author, the Duc de Rohan, who writes about the principles of government, and says of that of England, "*La constitution de l'Angleterre est une grande Bête, qui ne saurait mourir si elle ne se tue pas elle-même.*" Now that is precisely what I could have said in six sheets of paper, and not more clearly. England will not be *felo de se* this bout. I trust in Providence, and in the manly principles of Lord North, Lord Suffolk, and half a dozen more of those sound politicians who have a fair and just preponderance in the management of that constitution. If I hear of a *half measure* in the next six months, I shall be sorry for it; if I could hear of a *cruel one* I should be still more so. But there is at

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bottom in John Bull and all his children, an innate principle of humanity, which no other nation under the sun can boast of. John Bull can quarrel and box with his own brother, and give or take a black eye with every exertion of his hot-headedness; but to shake hands and be friends again, without the smallest remnant of rancour, is a species of benevolence which, as far as I know, belongs to John exclusively, and I love him for it most cordially. Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, March 3rd, 1775.

THERE is, indeed, a noble ardour in the exertions of your friendship, but it is what I expected, my dear Chamier, and the pleasure of surprise is the only one which I firmly believe and hope I shall never once owe to you through life. When a man says to his friend, "Sir, I am struck dumb by the accumulation of your kindnesses," he means to say, "Sir, you are a much honester and more warm-hearted fellow than I took you to be;" and, between you and I, the compliment is but a sorry one. Now, Master Anthony, I tell you that you may run me fifty letters into your debt (though I have no such intention), and you may lay twice as many essential obligations upon my shoulders, and yet I shall sit very easy under them, without either disgust or astonishment, hugging myself on the conviction of my conscience, that when my turn comes to do kind offices, you shall see that I am both as zealous and as active as yourself. Poursuivez donc, mon brave Chamier, donnez moi vos manifestes d'Amérique, et je vous enverrai en revanche, des bulletins de Paris. Le Roi Français a tranché net le progrès des echasses, et l'etablissement des manteaux, et haut de chausses, à sa cour; par la déclaration à son léver, que le Mardi Gras serait l'epoque

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decisive de leur suppression. Voila une grande affaire, sur laquelle il n'y a plus de fausses conjectures à faire! J'en dirais volontiers autant de vos combustions Américaines; quoique je sois bien loin de les mettre en balance avec la destinée de *toutes les modes de l'Europe.*

Now for some politics in plain English. I can't help thinking that you see the American affairs in too black a light. I have my little private information, but all I gather serves to enforce my belief, that the moment of your downright decision as to measures, was the very happy crisis of the fate of the mother country and her children. Ricketty, peevish, and obstreperous brats there are amongst that offspring, that is most certain; but how the devil did you suppose that the honest, well-disposed children in the nursery should show their faces in support of the parental authority, while you, the father, left it a doubtful point, whether you would apply the rod of wholesome chastisement to the breech of a forward stripling, or pull down your own trowsers, and request Master to perform the same office towards yourself. I may be too sanguine; but if the late measures, *properly executed,* be not as effectual, as I know them to be well founded, I will throw my political pen to the dogs, and write romances for the circulating library.*

I like the augmentation plan contained in your last very well; but I have no conception of that insipid immortality which your hundred of old proprietors of

* It may seem to many of our day (with the result of the conflict full in view) inconsistent with the acknowledged political sagacity of Sir R. M. Keith, to have looked forward with such confidence to its widely-differing issue. But even had the opinion not been shared with many of the greatest and wisest of his time, who could wonder that a veteran of the Seven Years' War, who had there learned how Britons could fight when ably led to victory, against the "chosen troops of France," should anticipate a similar triumph to his country's arms, when her whole energies were about to be exerted against undisciplined levies of what all (save themselves) were still agreed in denominating "rebels!"

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regiments have enjoyed for a year or two past. There are at least a score of them who have been long dead in law to every purpose of comfort or utility; and if Doctor Dominicetti has bathed these old Fogrums into youth again, he has done the worst service he possibly could to the art military. Not that I care a button, Squire Chamier. I have the King's bread to eat till these gentlemen shall petition for Christian burial; but I am sorry for all my *eight-and-sixpenny brethren* of long standing, who have nothing but merit and the bare eight-and-sixpence. I had a regiment sixteen years ago; and I think in about sixteen more I shall get another—so that you see I am half way between my old and new corps. But all this is to me a matter of joke, for I repeat to you that I hate injustice, and shall never countenance it, in the case of Sir Robert, or Sir anybody else. Basta! I must bore my good Lord Suffolk for half an hour, and then I return to your worship. Good bye to you in the meantime.

March 4th.

Do you know, my friend, that I am laying the corner-stone of such a castle in the air, as will lodge you and all my intimates most comfortably: aye, and speedily too, if no untoward accident overthrows my scaffolding.

I hope in about two months hence, to—to employ in person the labours of your corkscrew, instead of those of your pen; and to take possession of that same blue and white room at Epsom, which I mentioned to you in my last. But *mum* is the word, till I have heard once more from Cleveland Row, and satisfied my own internal monitor that the self-indulgence of such a trip can in no shape turn to the detriment of the King's service. I both respect my public duties, and love them; and though no man can have a better plea than mine for obtaining a short vacation, I shall never think of self till my betters are served. If my castle stands, as I

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hope it will, remember that after divesting myself most cheerfully of all my terrestrial property, after doing justice to my family, and to my excellent Drummonds, I will think of nothing but pleasure; and the man who shall dare to treat me as a politician, is my worst of foes, and shall be dealt with as such. If I have any parts, (a point about which I am as *dubus* as Peter Taylor,) I am determined to leave them all at Vienna; and to carry nothing to Epsom but the "light heart, and the" *no* "pair of breeches," which descend to me from my Highland ancestors! Whisper to the *Gang* my intentions, and if any friend asks you what the deuce I can have to do in England, tell him that I have been for three years distressed, in the capital of the Holy Roman Empire, with a famine of nonsense; which I fly to make up for in the company of a dozen of the most harmless fellows in the county of Middlesex.

The purpose is an honest one, and I wish I may be hanged if I have any other in the journey. We will go to Hampton,* my Chamier, and to Mistley,† and to Euston,‡ and to Coombank,§ and we will perform wonders of merriment everywhere. And therefore I must insist upon your laying down your employment, unless Lord Barrington will promise that you shall never be required to think or write one quarter of an hour about business, during my six months intended stay in England. Lord Barrington ‖ will see the necessity of this indulgence; for he is too reasonable to suppose that I can spare you from my pleasures, to sign the mandates for his *bloody massacres*. We will call upon his lordship too at Beckett,¶ if he behaves handsomely; and I will tell him, over a bottle of claret,

* Lord Suffolk's. † Mr. Rigby's.
‡ Duke of Grafton's. § Lord Frederick Campbell's.
‖ The War Secretary, Mr. Chamier's principal.
¶ His lordship's seat.

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how we Germans have brought the art of manslaughter to a wonderful degree of perfection, by the simple virtues of a *crab-stick*. Yet still I tell you that mum is the word, till I fire the signal gun in my next epistle. This one is long enough in all conscience, for I have five hundred things to do, and each of them duller than another. Conquer America before I get among you, that I may have no plague about the matter; but never forget that I order you to be not only *stout*, but *merciful*. Adieu, dear Cham; what a blessed prospect I have before me, if all bowls run fair! God bless you, my honest friend.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, March 20th, 1775.

I WILL make haste home to England, my dear Chamier, if it were for no other reason but to make you a present of a better microscope for examining narrowly the beauties and blemishes of human nature. The one you peeped through when you wrote your letter, No. 7, was a black, and yellow, and green, and one half of the objects were turned topsy-turvy! and all their protuberances appeared wens and ulcers. I will not allow you, my dear friend, to copy such scare-crows; and the most I can possibly allow you is, when I have painted the outlines of Jack Bull or Yankee in all the glaring tints of sky-blue and rose colour, that you shall dip a good strong pencil in dark brown, and give both force and truth to the picture by a masterly dark hue here and there. How the deuce is it possible that a man of so warm and beneficent mind as yours, blessed with excellent friends, and conscious of their value, should think so hardly as you do of his countrymen? who, with stronger vices and virtues than any other nation under the sun, have never suffered one day to pass over my

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head amongst them, without affording me some proof of feelings and generous humanity.

Their necessitous traders in foreign ports, the ferocious miscreants who inhabit the outskirts of our colonies in America, may be guilty of all the crimes you ascribe to them, without their ever affecting my opinions concerning the bulk of the community, and I'll tell you why; because when I buy a large piece of broad cloth, and have convinced myself by a thorough examination that it is well spun, well woven, and warm and durable through nine-tenths of the web, I don't value it a pin the less because it has been fretted and moth-eaten within two inches of the selvedge. I love mankind, and our own homespun part of it, from the bottom of my heart; and it would be a pretty thing indeed, if a fellow like me, who has his Suffolks, his Chamiers, his Drummonds, his Campbells, and his Conways to boast of, should lay thorns upon his own pillow, because there are thieves and pickpockets in the purlieus of St. Giles's. It may very possibly be, my dear Anthony, that I over-rate the qualities of every piece of stuff that I handle; but let me tell you that delusion (if it be one) is the very jewel of my crown, which I will never part with. So much for a dissertation upon ourselves—now to business. I am preparing to set out in a fortnight, or little more, and jogging on comfortably through Bavaria, Suabia, and France (with a fandango of eight days at Paris), I shall get to Calais in the first week of May. I have just heard that Lord Stormont is going to England, but that makes no alteration in my plan, as I neither wish to see the grandees in familiar intercourse, nor to talk politics at Paris. You imagine I joked when I desired you to fit up for me the blue-white room in your castle; I hope you now conceive that it is downright earnest.

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You know, my dear Chamier, how earnestly I wish to be of some service to the widow and children of our deceased friend. Perhaps a thorough examination of character, dispositions, talents, and circumstances, may put it in my power to give some salutary counsel; and I give you my word that I shall think my time and efforts very well employed in forwarding an object of such essential importance. I may have too high an idea of my own weight in those matters; but with your assistance, and all the motives of gratitude and affection, I will not despair of being useful to that distressed family.

Tell Mrs. Bradshaw what I say, and prepare me for an interference which I flatter myself will appear to her neither presumptuous nor blameable.

I feel the hurry of approaching departure already coming upon me, and have many bottoms to wind up before I draw on my boots. Adieu then, my dear Chamier. My love to all the *Gang*. Give me a sheet of your best at Paris, load me with your commissions there, and let me once have it in my power to boast that I have given you some proof of my cordial attachment.

Yours,

R. M. K.

The enjoyment of this long desired permission to return to England, must have been enhanced by the kind and flattering manner in which it was conveyed by Sir R. M. Keith's official superior, and the sympathy expressed with his recently wounded private feelings.

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[*Private.*]

LORD SUFFOLK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, January 17th, 1775.

DEAR KEITH,

You shall never have reason to deem your confidence ill placed, or thrown away upon a cold insensible friend. I enter zealously into every part of your condition;* and as you have made me heir to the affections you had placed on those who are gone, I will not be an ungrateful, and I hope I shall not be an useless legatee. I write by the common post, and, therefore, am forced to suppress half I feel, and half I wish to say. We'll take the subject up again when we meet. Let it suffice at present that I read your letter with all the warmth with which you wrote it.

The most gracious of masters allows me to send you a leave of absence (which I hereby convey) without waiting for further application. You are at liberty to profit by it, as soon as you please, as I am confident that, if anything happens to render your departure from Vienna inconsistent with the King's service, it will sleep very quietly in your pocket. At present, I foresee no such event. I hope I need not assure you of the cordial satisfaction with which I look forward to our meeting. God bless you, my dear Keith. Believe me, not in expression only, but in fact, your affectionate and faithful friend,

SUFFOLK.

So very small a portion of the life of one attached by feelings of no common warmth and patriotism to his

* The family affairs of Sir R. M. Keith, and the death some months before (to which, and to Mr. Bradshaw's, Lord S. feelingly alludes) of his venerable father, rendered extremely desirable this visit to his native country.

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native country, were passed within the precincts of the Britain—still less of the Scotland—he loved so dearly, that the little episode of Sir Robert Keith's election to represent the county in which his family was situated, will not be deemed intrusive; especially as while the readiness with which the popular candidate was hailed by the gentlemen electors, is proved by the flattering letters yet extant in their respective hand-writings—a something apparently equivocal in the support of an influential nobleman, drew forth one of those manly, straight-forward exhibitions of character, which, standing out, as they occasionally did, from the usually unruffled tenor of a life, of which urbanity and good temper formed the prevailing characteristics—serve to prove the perfect compatibility with these endearing qualities, of the nicest sense of honour, and most uncompromising vindication of individual rights.

Sir R. M. Keith having obtained leave of absence in the year 1775, to regulate his private affairs, and enjoy a few months' relaxation from the duties of his mission, had arrived in England towards the end of April. To prove with what feelings the event had been anticipated by his friends, and in corroboration of the features of character assigned to him (it may be thought too partially) above, it is impossible to resist quoting the effusions of a friendship, so honourable to both, as that of Lord Frederick Campbell on the occasion:—

Coombank, April 20th, 1775.

It is a great comfort, my dear Keith, to know that I am so soon to see May—the chimney-sweeper's garlands—and yourself! I doubt, as you say, whether you are a whit richer or more grave than these black gentlemen, but I am sure you are wiser, therefore I need only say a word to your Excellency; the house in Parliament-street is your's, saving and reserving to me

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a bed-chamber. The family are all settled here; the remainder of the Parliament, and a great deal of your company, may force me at times to London—nothing less. Fine weather, good friends, and Frederick, will, I trust, often draw you to Coombank. You are no farmer. I have nothing worth sending from hence. Adieu, my dear Keith. This only comes to insure your depositing yourself at my door.

Yours, most truly,

F. C.

A natural delicacy having created some hesitation in accepting the above friendly offer, it was thus reiterated:—

Friday, May 5th.

I doubt, my dear Keith, if there ever was a compliment between you and me; but I am sure there must not be any for the future. I said Parliament-street was yours, and I meant exactly what was said. Mrs. Frederick will not be in town; she expects a little love at Coombank. How I rejoice to know you are coming, *like the spring itself—warm, mild, and cheerful!*

Yours, most truly,

F. C.

The anticipated visit, and others alluded to in the correspondence, having briefly taken place, Sir Robert flew of course, as soon as business permitted, to visit his native country, and cheer with his presence the house which the previous year had been deprived of its venerable head. Of this meeting with his sisters no record has unfortunately been preserved.

Business, however, and the approach of winter, not to mention the attraction of such friends, had recalled Sir Robert to London, when the following note from Mr. Fraser of the War Office, Under Secretary to his friend and principal, Lord Suffolk, conveyed to him

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the news of the vacancy in the representation of the county of Peebles:—

DEAR SIR,

I called upon you to mention a circumstance which I thought it might be of moment to you to have the earliest notice of. I have just heard, at the House of Commons, that Adam Hay died of an inflammation this morning. If I mistake not, you are a freeholder in the county he represented; and I fancy, if taken in time, may succeed him. The Lord Advocate for Scotland can be of great use there. Excuse this liberty. Your's very much,

J. FRASER.

A seat in Parliament (not then deemed incompatible with a temporary absence from England, which any change of ministry might terminate—though on his prolonged residence abroad, the upright feelings of Sir Robert Keith led him afterwards to relinquish it) having been to him an object of legitimate ambition, he manifested his usual energy and decision in pursuing it. One day only elapsed from the intimation, ere having written the following letter, expressive of his views, to the friend of his family, and at that time most influential individual in Scotland, one moreover intimately connected with the county of Peebles—Lord Chief Baron Montgomery; he followed it up by a journey so rapid for the season and times, as almost to imitate the transits (which would then have seemed fabulous) of our day.

SIR MURRAY KEITH TO THE LORD CHIEF BARON.

London, 16th November, 10 at night.

MY LORD,

After what your lordship has seen in the letters which were sent to you by express yesterday,

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from my excellent patron the Earl of Suffolk, and my good friend the Solicitor-General, I need not say with how much alacrity and zeal I take the liberty to offer myself to your lordship and the gentlemen of the county of Peebles, as a candidate to supply the vacancy in Parliament which the sudden death of Mr. Hay has occasioned. I shall set out to-morrow forenoon for Edinburgh, to request in person the honour of your lordship's countenance and support, which I know to be of infinite weight with the county, and I shall think myself peculiarly happy if, through your lordship's kind assistance and advice, I can render myself agreeable to that truly respectable body of gentlemen, to represent whom in Parliament I shall esteem the highest honour that can be conferred on me. In the meantime, I can only say that I take pleasure in reflecting how much of my success in this fair and honourable pursuit will depend on the active share which your lordship will, I flatter myself, be inclined to take in it, from a regard to the weighty recommendations which have preceded this letter. My own personal claims can only arise from uprightness of my intentions in every branch of public business, and from those sentiments of sincere attachment and respect with which I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

Circumstances did not permit him to leave London until pretty late on November 17th, and on the 19th he had reached within a few hours of Edinburgh—a feat implying "seventy years ago" considerable energy of purpose. He thus writes on that evening:—

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SIR MURRAY KEITH TO LORD CHIEF BARON MONTGOMERY.

Wooler Haughhead, Nov. 19th, 8 o'clock.

My Lord,

Relying with the utmost confidence on the kind and powerful support which the Earl of Suffolk and many of my friends in London have given me reason to expect from your lordship in the election for the county of Peebles, I now venture to give you this trouble; at the same time that I think it my duty to convey to your lordship's hands, as early as possible, the inclosed letter from Lord North, which I received from him on Friday afternoon.

The expedition with which I have made my journey from London makes it probable that I have outstripped an express which I took the liberty of despatching to your lordship on Thursday night. It is therefore necessary that I should again express the satisfaction I feel in thinking that my success as a candidate to supply the place of the late Mr. Hay will depend in a great measure upon your lordship's advice and assistance, both of which will lay me under a most essential obligation.

I shall be in Edinburgh an hour after the servant who carries this, and I shall immediately do myself the honour to wait upon you in order to regulate the manner of my application to the gentlemen freeholders* of the county by your lordship's superior judgment and friendly counsel. My intention is to write to them immediately upon my arrival in Edinburgh, as I am now aware that not a moment of time should be lost; and afterwards I shall take the first opportunity of paying my respects to each of them in person. I carry down with

* The epithet was not then one of mere courtesy. Previous to the Reform Bill, the landed gentry of the counties in Scotland elected the representative.

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me the Speaker's writ, which I shall deliver to the sheriff when your lordship thinks proper. I write this in a great hurry, and hoping to see you so soon, I can only add the assurances of the sincere attachment and respect with which

I am, &c.,

R. M. K.

P. S.—I must request of your lordship an exact list of the freeholders.

The address by which this was followed up may, by its simple brevity, be contrasted with elaborate modern manifestoes. It bore the then respectful form of an individual appeal.

"SIR,

"The death of our late worthy member, Mr. Hay, having made a vacancy in Parliament, I take the liberty to solicit the honour of your support and interest in my favour at the approaching election for the county of Peebles.

"It will give me great pleasure to have an opportunity of personally assuring you, that if a body of electors so truly respectable shall esteem me worthy to be their representative, I shall have no greater ambition than to strengthen their esteem by my conduct in Parliament; as well as by dedicating to the gentlemen of the county the most zealous, uninfluenced, and grateful services of my future life."

The appeal thus fearlessly and honestly made was most gratifyingly responded to. Sir Robert thus writes to his friend, Lord Suffolk:—

"I dined at the Chief Baron's, with a great number of the principal freeholders. His lordship proposed me as a candidate, drank to unanimity in the county, and every person present assured me of their interest, and

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of their hopes that the election will be unanimous. The sheriff of the county was present. I delivered to him the writ of election. The day is appointed for the 15th of December, and no appearance of opposition to be heard of.

"I write to the freeholders this day, and shall, in the course of the next fortnight, visit every one of them, at their houses in the country. And now, my dear lord, let me beg of you to forgive all the trouble I have given you, and to add a favour more to the number I so gratefully acknowledge, by acquainting Lord North with the particulars of this transaction, as well as of my just sense of the essential obligation his lordship has conferred on me by his distinguished countenance in every part of it. The great hurry in which I am will plead my apology to Lord North for not addressing his lordship in a separate letter."

Thus far all had proceeded smoothly towards undisputed success; but an unexpected obstacle having arisen, in some previously-entertained views of Lord March, which it was proposed to Sir Robert, and pressed on him too, to purchase the immediate relinquishment of, by the compromise of engaging to support his lordship on a future occasion—the spirit and decision of character already alluded to gave birth to the following indignant repudiation of an expedient, by which he was assured his return on the present vacancy would be rendered certain. If the remark were not too fanciful, it might be imagined that in the copy, yet extant, the usually firm characters of Sir Robert's clear handwriting had derived additional boldness from the subject-matter of the paper. It runs thus:—

"The warm and unconditional support of Lord March to Sir Robert Murray Keith, when he first mentioned his intention to offer himself as a candidate for the county of Peebles, would have been looked upon by

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Sir Robert as an essential favour, and acknowledged accordingly.

"If Lord March withdraws at this moment his opposition to Sir Robert's election, it must be in consequence of the request of his lordship's friends, and by no means of any such request made by, or for Sir Robert. The motive of withdrawing it is to accommodate the wishes of Lord March's friends, and theirs only. Sir Robert therefore receives by this measure no personal favour from Lord March.

"He now stands (as he has done from the beginning) an independent, uninfluenced, and unrestricted candidate, for the honour of representing the county of Peebles in Parliament. He wishes that Lord March's friends, and every gentleman of the county may know that he offers his services to them for this, and every succeeding Parliament, whilst those services can be acceptable; and that in the event of his ceasing, at any future period, to request the honour of their votes for himself, he will be at full liberty to oppose the interest of Lord March, or that of any other individual in the county, whose election may at that time appear to Sir Robert detrimental to the true interests of the county at large.

"This declaration he has read, and delivered in writing to the Lord Chief Baron, allowing him to make what use of it he thinks proper, as Sir Robert intends to hold the same language to every freeholder of the county."

The result of this spirited conduct was (as we shall find on a subsequent and more important occasion) complete. A minute, subjoined, in the same handwriting, runs thus:—

"The Lord Chief Baron has this day assured Sir Robert Murray Keith, in presence of Lord Elliot and Mr. Solicitor Murray, that he is authorised by Lord March, and does offer in his lordship's name to Sir

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Robert, Lord March's unconditional support at the ensuing election for the county of Peebles; and it is clearly understood by all these gentlemen that no stipulation whatever is claimed or expected of Sir Robert, by which he can be in any shape restricted, in regard to the part he may think proper to take at any subsequent election for the said county."

Of the kind interest taken by his English friends in the successful result of his expedition—many proofs remain. Previous to the decision, Lord Suffolk thus writes:—

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I heartily wish you a good journey into Scotland, and all success in the business you are going upon. Wherever my wishes are likely to be attended to, I beg you will let it be known how entirely you have them, and how happy I shall be to see you returned Knight of the Shire for the county of Peebles. Pray present my best compliments to my Lord Chief Baron, and believe me, upon all occasions,

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

SUFFOLK.

Mr. Fraser thus warmly expresses himself:—

"*St. James's, Nov. 22nd*, 1775.

"Sir Robert for ever! Huzzah! Success attend you, is my very sincere wish; and I find I shall not be disappointed.—You have all the support you deserve."

When the event had become known, it drew forth from his staunch friend, Lord Frederick Campbell, the following:—

Dec. 25th, 1775.

I did not leave town, dear Keith, till *Friday* morning. Often did I dine with the Drummonds in expectation of seeing you come in, all dirt, and worthy of us Parliament dirty dogs. I knew all was safe, but I wished to

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know so from *yourself*. I have now only to rejoice, and thank you for your kind thought of a little quiet and comfort at Coombank. You will make Lady Frederick and me truly happy. When shall we see you?

F. C.

The sojourn in England which so many circumstances, public and private, combined to render agreeable, was abruptly concluded, in the following April, by a hint from a then *subordinate* friend in office, which Sir Robert was not the man to disregard.

Mr. Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, then Secretary under Lord Suffolk, whose friendship for Sir R. M. Keith he seems thus early to have shared, and subsequently to have inherited, thus writes:—

St. James' Street, Friday, half-past 12.

MY DEAR SIR,

As it appears, from Mr. Ernst's* letter of the 6th instant, that the Empress Queen is in a very dangerous state of health, and in a way that may end in her immediate decease, I think it right to submit to you, *en ami*, for your private consideration, whether it may not be expedient to desire to return to your post within the next forty-eight hours.

The alarm may prove premature, or if it should not be so, Mr. Ernst appears, at all events, to be fully capable. Yet your rank, experience, information, &c. &c., will all be of consequence in the opening of a new reign.

Yours faithfully and affectionately,

WM. EDEN.

How promptly this unofficial hint was acted upon, by one whose motto (as the son of Maria Theresa afterwards said of him) was "decision and punctuality," we have *incidental* means of verifying. Though the above note

* Sir R. M. Keith's private secretary.

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is without any specific date, yet a letter from Vienna of the 6th, could not, even by *estafette*, have reached London sooner than the 12th or 13th (the course of post between the capitals seems then to have been a *fortnight*); and by the 19th (or a day earlier indeed) the following letter shows the indefatigable traveller, who must have posted day and night, to have reached Ulm; his twenty-four hours' repose at which, was probably justified by accounts of the Empress's amended health.

MR. HUGH ELLIOTT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Ulm, 19th April, 1776.

My dear Sir Robert,

Although it is barely a quarter of an hour since you left me, I cannot resist the desire I feel of putting pen to paper, to thank you again and again for the many unlooked for marks of friendship and thorough confidence which you have heaped upon me within the last twenty-four hours.

I am really writing from the very bottom of my heart, when I assure you, that it is neither the being flattered with your attentions to me, nor interested reflections on the personal advantages I may reap from your connection or support, that dictate the warmest expressions of real gratitude and regard. No! Sir Robert, I hope it is a real sympathy of soul, in those humane, manly, and judicious sentiments, which, even during the short period we have passed together, have displayed themselves to me in their full vigour. Excuse this incoherent style; I am excited, and write as I feel: whatever may have passed between us on self-interested objects, is merely secondary in my mind, to what regards the exertion of principles such as you avow, and, I know, would approve of. But even your advice on that head is not what makes the greatest impression upon me. It is that frank and unreserved proffer of your friendship

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that I wish to prove myself worthy of. I feel sensibly the want of necessary knowledge and experience; but no diligence or application shall be wanting on my side to make up the deficiency. Excuse this scrawl. But I am desirous that, among the old friends you are going to meet, this may be permitted to remind you of one, who indeed has no other claim upon you than the sincerity of his attachment, and desire of trying every opportunity to prove how sincerely he is your devoted,

HUGH ELLIOTT.

This letter cannot be passed over without comment; both as affording, from the intensity of the feelings it expresses (the result of one interview), some idea of the fascination for *good*, exercised over the ingenuous mind of youth, by the warmest friend it perhaps ever possessed; and still more from the noble exemplification in the afterwards distinguished diplomatic career of the writer, of the very principles and sentiments with which it had been the benevolent purpose of the veteran in its field, to imbue his docile junior. Twelve years later, Mr. Elliott (then Sir R. Keith's worthy successor at Copenhagen) enjoyed and improved to the utmost a similar opportunity of interfering, with a spirit and dignity, allied to that of his tutor in politics, in the affairs of the same northern kingdoms; "passing over from Denmark on his own responsibility (there being, strange to say! then no minister from Great Britain, Prussia, or France, at the Court of Stockholm,") to avert, by his successful interposition, the horrors of war from both nations, and of absolute ruin from the latter, menaced by the invasion of 12,000 Danish auxiliaries to Russia, with the loss of Gottenburg, and with it of the kingdom. In the self-assumed character (afterwards fully recognised) of delegate from those friendly, but distant, mediating powers, Mr. Elliott, "with a zeal, address, dexterity,

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and ability, in a delicate and difficult negotiation, which have been seldom equalled, and never exceeded," enforced and obtained an armistice, by which the King and realm of Sweden were ultimately saved. And then (not less in the spirit of the advice alluded to in the letter) when the versatility and tergiversation of the rescued Prince made him depart from the plain and straightforward path which became his rank and dignity—it was the British Envoy's noble part to vindicate his "country's veracity, stable as the foundation of her island;" and having been complimented by the King on his glorious situation of "an individual, sole depositary of the solemn word of a great King," to remind him, "in the sacred name of truth," of the necessity of adhering to engagements contracted under its sanction.

DR. ROBERTSON* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Edinburgh, August 12th, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

Though I have no doubt of your attending to my literary commission of the sixteenth century, as carefully as you would do to a Secretary of State's dispatch of the present one, yet a resolution I have come to obliges me to take the liberty of inquiring what success you have met with in your inquiries about the Mexican paintings in the Imperial Library.

I had determined to defer publishing any part of my History of America, until the whole was completed. But the unfortunate situation into which we have got with our colonies, obliges me to alter that resolution. It is impossible to give any description of their political or commercial situation, or to venture upon any speculation concerning them, while the contest between us

* The eminent historian of America and of Charles the Fifth, and Principal of the Edinburgh University.

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remains undecided. Instead of a History, one could write only the conjecture or factious pamphlet of the day. In whatever way the dispute terminates, a new face of things must be introduced into British America; the colonies must either become independent states, or be reduced to a more perfect dependence than formerly. It becomes necessary then, to wait for some time, before one can publish anything concerning them. When that period may arrive is uncertain: and, in the mean time a juncture, when the attention, not only in Great Britain, but of all Europe, is turned to America, and which renders every publication concerning it interesting, will be lost.

This has induced me to seize the occasion that presents itself, and to publish this winter, the two first volumes of my work. These will contain the history of the discovery of America; the progress of the Spanish arms there; the conquest of Mexico and Peru; as much of the natural history of the New World as is fit for a book of general reading; a long inquiry into the manners of its rudest inhabitants; a view of the Mexican and Peruvian monarchies; and a large detail of the state of Spanish settlements, and their principles of colonisation, which have served as our model, and that of all other nations, in their establishments in the New World. I flatter myself, that from the uncommon opportunities I have had of getting information from Spain, this book may prove interesting and curious. I have sold it to my former proprietors, and at the same rate with Charles the Fifth; so that the decision concerning literary property has not affected the sale of books.

From this long detail, with which I should not have troubled you, had I not known that *nous autres savans*, and our affairs are of greater estimation among you continental gentleman of rank and fashion, than they are in this island, you will perceive of how much

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consequence it will be to me to be informed *soon* whether you can procure me an accurate copy of the Mexican paintings, that I may judge whether they are of such merit as to be published. I hope you will believe, that I feel very sensibly the kindness with which you undertook this commission, which I am aware will give you a great deal of trouble; I will not add to it by labouring any apology. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, dear sir, &c.

W. ROBERTSON.

P. S.—On Friday, I saw for the *last time* our worthy friend, Mr. Hume.* He died yesterday, as much beloved by those who enjoyed his society, for his amiable qualities, as he was admired by others for his genius and talents.

SIR JOSEPH YORKE† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, July 26th, 1776.

DEAR KEITH,

I have been so long at the oar, that I am not surprised at anybody for lying upon it sometimes; and as the foreign politics have not, since your arrival in Austria, been of a nature to require a close correspondence between your court and this country, I have not been surprised at your silence, much less have I imputed it to any diminution of your esteem or friendship. Of that I certainly should have been jealous; having long marked you out as one to whom I wished well, of whom I thought well, and to whom I should be always happy to be of service. I am likewise thoroughly convinced that, if you could give me pleasure, or do me service, you would never neglect the opportunity. This is my creed; and which you won't think heterodox.

Her Imperial Majesty does very well to bring her

* This announcement of the death of one great historian by another is very interesting.

† His Majesty's minister at the Hague; and *thirty years'* friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

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children to her, since it was inconvenient to go to them. She is happy in seeing such a family rising round her, which I hope she will long live in health to enjoy. If you, in a great circle, talk of a scene of uniformity, what can *we* pretend to? In fact, we do little, and pretend to nothing; nor shall, till exterior events force us out. You were in England during that miserable negotiation about your old comrades here,* and within reach of observing my conduct, which I hope you will have approved; indeed, I did everything in my power, nor can I almost bring myself to believe that any intrigue could thwart a proposal in which the States alone were the gainers. The poor bodies are quite heart-broken, which gives me great concern, after such eminent services as they have performed for above *two centuries*. The young folks are all striving to creep into the British service, and a few years will totally annihilate them.

I have deferred my tour home till America returns to its senses. The measures taken for that purpose have my hearty approbation; and if they don't succeed, I shall never pretend to calculate again.† All the pamphlets from that side which I have lately seen prove their interior horribly divided, and that the majority desire peace at any rate. I am therefore glad to see our operations directed against New England, the *Pandemonium* of America; nor do I despair of seeing the remnant of the rebellion, before many months expire, blocked up in Boston, obliged to surrender at discretion, delivering up its leaders: an event

* The Scots Brigade in the service of Holland. Some miserable motives of economy or jealousy seem to have occasioned their long services to be very ill requited.

† This letter, an excellent one, has been chiefly inserted as proving the sanguine views of a far older and less hopeful politician than Sir R. M. K., as to the issue of the contest with the colonies; and also as throwing light on the succeeding letter from Captain (afterwards Sir Charles) Douglas, from Quebec.

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I heartily pray for. Has General Douglas notified his wife's being delivered of a girl? He sent me notice of the event, adding, that had it been a boy he would have written himself! We wanted him to christen her *Isis*, in honour of his brother Charles's ship, which broke through all the ice of Newfoundland to save Quebec; indeed, I had great pleasure in his having succeeded, and felt much obliged by his friendship, in acquainting me with it under his own hand. Adieu, my dear sir. You will never find me otherwise than you have ever known me, *i. e.*, with truth, attachment, and affection,

Your faithful and devoted friend and servant,

JOSEPH YORKE.

CAPTAIN (AFTERWARDS SIR CHARLES) DOUGLAS, R.N.*
TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Isis, before Quebec, May 12th, 1776.

DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Allow me, from the bottom of my heart, to congratulate you, and all the friends of too-long-insulted Great Britain, on the great event of the 6th, replete with ruin to the rebels, and prosperity to the loyal cause in Canada. I have appointed Mr. Butler third lieutenant of his Majesty's ship, in consideration of his zealous and manly services; especially in forcing our way through the ice, without which I possibly had not got here before a reinforcement of two rebel battalions, which met their flying fellow-rebels six miles above this place, and joined with them in a retreat towards Montreal, if not quite so regular, full as expeditious as that

* This gallant officer, whose present exploit earned for him merited distinction, was subsequently immortalised by his participation as Flag-Captain to the Admiral in Rodney's memorable victory, of which he, on the *very following morning*, aware of Sir R. M. Keith's patriotic anxieties, transmitted to him a detailed account.

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of the ten thousand Greeks. I therefore, my dear sir, beg that you may strain every nerve to get the appointment of the said man of extraordinary merit confirmed. I congratulate Sir Alexander and Lady Dick upon his promotion. Ask Lord Sandwich for a few traits out of a late Philadelphian pamphlet, called "Common Sense," and wonder how any man can ever have opened his lips, either in or out of Parliament, for those now unmasked traitors. They must have known little of *New England*, or have had little love for the *old one*, who did so! It was found in the quarters of the *apothecary*, who lately arrived with a reinforcement, to command the army before Quebec. I am so busy in making all possible naval preparations for the further progress of our army upwards, that I have only time to say that I am, with unspeakable respect and esteem, dear Sir Robert,

Your most humble servant, and affectionate friend,

CHAS. DOUGLAS.

THE DUCHESS OF KINGSTON* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, May, 1776.

SIR,

The last time I had the honour to see you at my house, it did not occur to me that it would be

* The notoriety of this personage, with whose trial and conviction for bigamy all England, and indeed Europe, at one time rang, renders curious her attempted version of transactions so little creditable to her sex and country. When this was written, the fact, afterwards substantiated in open court, of the fraudulent destruction of the record of her prior marriage with Lord Bristol, was rather surmised than proved. Yet so equivocal was her position, that on the death of her second lord, Walpole thus writes, "All tongues are busy with her Grace of Kingston. The Duke is dead, and has given her his whole estate for life, and his personals for ever. To make her *sure* of it, she is entitled in the will, 'My dearest wife Elizabeth Duchess of Kingston, alias Elizabeth Chadleigh, alias Elizabeth Harvey.' Did you ever hear of a Duchess described in a will as a street-walker is indicted at the Old Bailey?" Of the trial he says, "Is it not a burlesque? when there could not be one

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necessary for me to trouble you upon the subject that this letter will contain. But as you are sensible how greatly you was esteemed by my dear Duke of Kingston, and my friend Lord Granby, and respected greatly by myself—I take the liberty to acquaint you with some circumstances with regard to my affairs. The inveteracy of my enemies does not only persecute me at law, but also in the public papers, against which there is no guard; nor can I wage war with all the hungry garrets in the English metropolis. My lawyers assure me there is not the least danger of my suffering by this persecution, if my mind can remain easy. For the Ecclesiastical Court gave a full sentence in my favour, and permission (as you and all England know) to marry with whom I should choose; and Mr. Harvey made a public renunciation, even in the Duke's house, by his proctor, in form of law; and I married the forever-dear Duke of Kingston, with the Archbishop's license, before forty persons, with the approbation of my Royal Mistress, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and all the Royal Family, who, with all the Court, wore my favours for a week.

Every token of affection and approbation, during my Lord's life, and at his death he gave me; leaving his personal estate to me for ever, and confirmed my marriage settlement by will; leaving me for my widowhood all of which he was possessed. And it was to my own generosity the family owed the benefit of succeeding to me; for his love and friendship was such, that had I not resisted by prayers and tears to his request, he would have given it to me for ever. The eldest nephew, for many reasons, was disinherited.

person in the hall who was not as much convinced of her bigamy as of his own existence?" She settled, at a later period, in Italy. He writes to Sir Horace Mann, "Your Duchess of Kingston is a shameless mountebank; as great a comedian as Sixtus Quintus himself."

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The principal cause was, that when he had (as you know) the advantage of being aide-de-camp to Duke Ferdinand in the late war, he quitted that post of honour and immediate service, to retire into a marching regiment, unemployed, and afterwards quitted the army, and lived extravagantly on the hope of a succession, which it was happily in the Duke's power to give to his more worthy brothers.

But not to trouble you too far, my heart bleeds for the ill impressions my friends in Germany may take from the evil reports of the public papers; and I depend upon your friendship to speak of the affair as it is.* For if, from any quibble in the law (which God forbid, and we do not expect) it should be differently judged, it will be a consolation that good men should know that it was with the sanction of the Church, Law, and Court, I united myself to the most honourable, just, and good being our country ever produced; and I can submit to anything that may befal me in this world, knowing that God will not afflict me more than I am able to bear. I wish you health and happiness; and depending upon your goodness of heart to excuse me,

I remain for ever,

Your sincere humble servant,

E. KINGSTON.

* The good will expressed in this epistle, by the too celebrated Duchess, was certainly not reciprocal. Sir R. M. Keith having been jestingly recommended by some one to turn it to advantage, and appropriate the enormous jointure, thus jocularly alludes to it:—"What say you to my marrying (as has been proposed to me) the *double* Dowager of Kingston! If her Grace (as she is fond of *pairs*) would agree to take along with me a strapping Horse Guards' officer, there might be no objection." In another, and more indignant mood, he exclaims, "Faugh! the very idea is revolting! Let her carry her Duchess-ship and her dowry to some other market." Nay, so uncourteously did the usually urbane plenipo return her civilities, that he is congratulated by a correspondent for having, by his interposition, effected her exclusion from the correct court of Vienna!

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Few circumstances in the ministerial career of Sir R. M. Keith were a greater source of benevolent satisfaction to himself, or left a more favourable impression of his character on others, than the opportunities he so largely enjoyed, and so cordially improved, of being at once the faithful Mentor and chosen companion of the many youths,* whom anxious parents, of the first families in England, continued, during his whole sojourn abroad, not merely to recommend to his protection, but actually to commit to his uncontrolled authority and affectionate surveillance.

For the more serious part of this labour of love, the soundness of his own early education and principles admirably qualified him; while for the latter he was so thoroughly fitted, by his own buoyant cheerfulness, and singular amenity of disposition, that lads of all ages and characters, not only looked back on the years passed at Vienna, as the happiest and sunniest of their lives, but seem to have poured out their hearts and feelings to him, throughout successive periods of after life, as to some congenial comrade or cherished schoolfellow: while the acknowledgments which his efforts in their behalf earned from distinguished parents, and the figure his *protégés* themselves frequently made in public or private life, must have assisted in crowning the evening of his days with that enviable serenity and cheerfulness, which accompanied him to the close of an honourable existence.

However gratifying to partiality it has been to peruse, and difficult for affection to select from, the *bales* of letters in which the gratitude of young and

* Amounting (according to his calculations, long ere the conclusion of his embassy) to nearly 500, of what he affectionately calls his "John Bulls," his "Vienna lads," and his "colony;" none of whom, he says, spite of some occasional frolics, or rare cases of extravagance, ever gave him reason to be seriously ashamed of them.

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old, towards one long cold in death, is embodied and embalmed—a few specimens alone, of a correspondence at once so instructive and honourable to humanity, can be given here. And as everything in biography, bearing however imperfectly the character of a whole, must ever be more interesting than detached fragments, the purpose of the Editor (to hold up to joint regard and approbation men whose friendship, notwithstanding the disparity of years, continued unimpaired during the life of the Mentor by whose counsels the character of the Telemachus of his fond predilection was avowedly formed) may best be promoted by inserting considerable portions of the correspondence of Sir Robert Keith with the two among his "*pupils*"* whom he felt most proud thus to designate; as a memorial of how age can love, and youth respond, where in the one case the fire of youth is tempered by early maturity, and on the other the wisdom of age not only divested of all asperity, but endeared and rendered attractive by the vivacity of youth.

The friendship of Sir R. M. Keith for every branch of the highly connected, highly endowed, and above all, highly respected family of Drummond, had descended to him from his own father; and he felt thus doubly disposed, even independently of strong personal obligations, to act the part of a parent, in its most literal sense, towards one of their offspring. That he did so in its fullest extent, the correspondence of a lifetime will show. That he was not inattentive to its lighter

* The late excellent Earl of Hardwicke; for the completion of the correspondence with whom (so honourable to both) the editor is indebted to his surviving Countess, the venerable lady already quoted in the memoir of the Queen of Denmark; and Andrew Berkeley Drummond, Esq., son to Mr. R. Drummond, of Charing Cross; to the hereditary kindness of whose representative, A. R. Drummond, Esq. is due the communication of letters handed down and preserved by him as cherished heir-looms.

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duties, the following letter, written shortly after his return to Vienna, and being joined there by his friend's son, will amusingly evince.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, July 28th, 1776.

I HAVE for this fortnight past been running about the country houses in the neighbourhood of this capital, without the most distant chance of enjoying one hour of that convivial gaiety which reigns at Mistley, Fawley, Wimbledon, Coombank, &c. Yet our noble personages are as civil and attentive as possible at their country seats; but still it is *otium cum dignitate* with a vengeance! and that same *dignitas* is to me a terrible damper of all social enjoyments. I have had my Andrew * for five days along with me at a princely castle, where he was powdered and perfumed by ten o'clock in the morning; then fetched a broiling walk in a *gilded* garden, dined in state, and after playing three grave rubbers at whist, we sallied forth for the evening's excursion in half a dozen coaches and six! Yet I think I showed Master Andrew some sights there, which repaid him in some degree for all the stately tediousness of his mornings; such lakes, meadows, and forests as eye never saw. In the midst of one forest, about sixty wild boars, with all their wives and children, did us the honour to accept of a cold collation of acorns and Turkey corn which we presented to them, and which they ate very comfortably within twenty yards of us, with only a slight screen of reeds between us and their hogships.

In another forest, laid out with taste, and ornamented

* Andrew Berkeley Drummond, Esq., then on his grand tour, and, as the son of his dearest friend, under the special charge of Sir R. M. Keith.

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with clean gravel walks, we met (*by appointment*) about two-and-twenty large stags of the red deer kind, to whom notice was given of our approach by the beating of a drum, and this for the best possible reason (as our master huntsman informed us), viz., because they are the most shy and timorous creatures imaginable! Certain it is, however, that they obeyed the summons, and a chasseur (a particular acquaintance of theirs, and who will have the kindness to shoot every one of them in their turn) dealt out their evening's repast in half-pecks of very clean-looking barley. We had our screen as before, and enjoyed their company mightily.

We saw all the *materiel* for hunting, fishing, and shooting of every kind; but to Andrew's great disappointment, there was not the smallest offer of a horse or gun, though the Prince, our landlord, keeps some two hundred steeds for the saddle, and has an armoury of guns equal to one of the rooms in the Tower. The hunting season, however, was not begun, that's the truth of the matter; and our very good-humoured host does everything by rule and measure, and is moreover broken down with the *gout*, as all great landholders ought to be.

I bade Andrew ask the Prince* (who is really a man of truth) how many huntsmen and their assistants he has in pay, for the care of all his forests and chases? I knew I should enjoy the effect of his answer upon my friend Andrew. The Prince said he really could not tell with any tolerable precision the number of his *men in green*, but he could affirm with safety that they are more than *three hundred*. Now, you begin to think that I have dreamt all this, but Andrew shall vouch for

* As Sir Robert subsequently mentions his intention of visiting *Esterhazy*, the Prince here mentioned must be Prince Lichtenstein; whose family had always cultivated the closest intimacy with Sir R. M. Keith's father and himself.

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every word of it; and in autumn I shall carry him to Prince Esterhazy's, in Hungary, where the marvels are still infinitely greater than those I have related. Yet often do I return in imagination to Mistley, Fawley, &c., where nobody wonders at anything but the total absence of care, constraint, and formality! I can be dull with continental great men, because it is a duty of my profession; but I am never the true Keith but when I am amidst the *Gang* and their adherents.

I thank you for the comfort of your letters of 25th June and 11th inst. Your chamærhododendros, and its cousin rhododendros chamæcistus (they must be charming plants by their flowery names) shall be found, if possible, and forwarded to you with care. If I can find anybody near the Hetscher (the high mountain mentioned in your note) who will undertake to gather me some of the seed, he shall be well paid for his trouble. I love to be employed in little commissions for you, it is the only chance I have, at this distance, of being any way useful to you. I hope soon to receive from you a whole bushel of *New York laurels*, which my friend Howe and his companions are as willing and able to gather, as any set of gentlemen we have sent abroad of a long while. When that expedition has achieved its enterprise, I shall think the fate of America once more in our hands. Solace me from time to time with sterling intelligence: it is a most essential obligation.

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, Feb. 11*th*, 1777.

THERE are sad doings, my dear Chamier, *et mes braves correspondans de Londres* m'ont plantés tous à la fois! Heureusement j'ai la foi du Charbonnier, et je crois que tout ce que je n'entends pas, doit aller *au mieux*

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possible! I suppose that you and the *Gang* have been holiday making, and that between this and the Queen's birthday, a page of your handwriting is not to be had for a king's ransom. Don't imagine I blame you, my dear Cham. I would in your place do precisely the same; and if I know anything in this world which is truly delightful, it is the gay and vacant hour in such parties as those you are now engaged in. Heaven bless you and your messmates! There are poor plenipos in the world who look towards Mistley with a longing eye; and to whom a cup of the claret you revel in, would be nectar and ambrosia!

12*th*.

Our Carnival is over, and I cannot say I am sorry for it. I am too old for all the bustle of that giddy season. I saw my *pupils* conclude their festivities last night by a ball at the Spanish Ambassador's, where they danced as merrily, and with a set of as pretty girls as ever I saw in my life. I left them at *six o'clock this morning!* The lads have done themselves honour, and deserve a sound sleep. Apropos to dancing. As I think myself obliged to make some report to the parents of the young gentlemen entrusted to my care, of the figure they may be expected to make in the world, and their progress in the ways of it, I have (for the satisfaction of Andrew Drummond's relations) had the enclosed sketch of his amiable person and enchanting graces drawn in a hurry, only to give them a slight idea of the manly dignity and simplicity of manners, in which he shone upon the late trying occasion of a Court country dance. I beg you will present this rude drawing of the young gentleman to his mother, assuring her, in my name, that it gives but a faint notion of her first-born, who is indeed the darling of the fair sex here. Tell Mr. Rigby that though in another style, his nephew's figure is not less interesting. Tell my good friend, Sir John

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Sebright, that young Englefield is a very deserving lad, and much liked. I have been kind to him for everybody's sake, and for his own.* Young Harvey, and Ashton Curzon's son, arrived just in time for our last gay doings. You see, my dear Cham, that my *school* is in good repute; and that I must infallibly end my days in the Marshalsea, if I feed all these boys only upon mutton and turnips. No matter, my mind is made up to it. Is not this like a country schoolmaster's report, at the holidays?

Yours,

R. M. K.

P. S.—This will be delivered to you by Mr. Simonet, a principal dancer of our theatre, and who, under Noverre, did wonders in the character of a dancing

* Of the conduct of Sir R. M. Keith towards his "boys," an accomplished English traveller, whose MS. letters have been kindly placed at the editor's disposal, thus expresses himself:—"The attention and kindness Sir Robert shows them all, is hardly to be imagined. He accompanies them everywhere, introduces them to the best company, and indeed in every respect takes a most fatherly charge of them." And had any motive beyond their own merit been required, to account for the popularity of his *protégés* with the fair sex in Vienna it would be found in the same writer's description of the "Young Austria," of that, and a long subsequent period. Some years later, he thus expresses himself:—"The young men here, almost without exception, are so stupid, and so ignorant, that there is no fear of any person of taste, or indeed of common sense, wishing to form the slightest connection with them. Unless one is at some pains, it is impossible even to meet with them, for in good company they are never to be seen; but to what place they go, or how they employ themselves, I have not been able to discover, as in this country taverns are unknown. It is not surprising that the young ladies of Vienna, who are uncommonly agreeable and well educated, complain much of this; and say that were it not for the English, they would have no one to speak to; and in the Carnival, when there are balls every night, would be reduced to dance with each other, for want of partners. I cannot account for this, but the fact is certain and obvious to the most superficial observer." The remark is corroborated by Sir Robert's frequent and pathetic complaints of the lack of suitable partners *for life* for his charming "*Vienna girls.*"

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lover, or hero. His greatest merit with me, and that which procures him this recommendation to your powerful protection, is having guided the movements of Andrew Drummond's fantastic toe, in quality of dancing-master. His wife, who accompanies him, has made his hair stand on end in the character of *Medea*, and that, to a man who loves a high *toupet*, is some merit. There is a brother-in-law, likewise of the party, who plays the first flute in the orchestra; and he has had the honour to instil into the said Andrew Drummond the first principles of the French Minuet, called "*Dragons pour boire,*"* which the young gentleman whistles very melodiously. You see, my dear Cham, that you are bound to protect these good people, who are engaged at the Opera, and will spare no pains to please the public. As a dancing-master for gentlemen or *ladies*, I know none preferable to *Simonet;* and as such you may *safely* recommend him to your acquaintance.

Perhaps Bob Drummond himself may not be averse to rub up his own minuet, in order to make a figure at the balls in Hampshire! Propose it to him, and, for *my sake,* mark his countenance when so reasonable a *step* is put in his way! *Badinage* apart, these Simonets and *Decamps*† are good people; and they have behaved extremely well for several years in this city. Do them what good you can, excuse this trouble, and believe me ever cordially yours,

R. M. K.

* The air immortalised by Scott, as the favourite of the Baron of Bradwardine.

† The continued respectability of a name, long connected with the *English* stage, has concurred with the above, as a motive for preserving this playful billet.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. CHAMIER.

Vienna, April 11th, 1777.

SINCE your letter of the 17th of March, I have been looking out impatiently for something of a fresher and more satisfactory purport than our friend Fraser's *dab* of a Gazette. I am *parched and dried up* with an ardent thirst for news, good and substantial news from America; yet am I forced to feed upon the above-mentioned scraps which were as crude and indigested as possible. Tell me, my Cham, when may the campaign open again? I must have Philadelphia in my possession by the middle of May. Pray tell me all about the new Dictator and his powers? I pity his Dictatorship with such a council at his elbow. Will Washington like this absurd pageantry? Has he sense enough to be a peacemaker? The moment of projection in America is fast approaching, and I need not tell you that all my warmest hopes are at stake upon the success of the chemistry. If it should turn those stubborn and ungrateful enthusiasts into loyal subjects, it will have done the best service to Old England, that has been rendered in the course of the last hundred years. If, on the contrary, experience shall convince us of the inefficiency of all our efforts to subdue that vast continent, I am clear for shaking off the Americans; leaving them to their own tottering independence, and making the most of them in the way of unrestrained commerce. It grieves me to see a set of Englishmen (and some of them good men too), recommending such a conduct to the three States of Great Britain as would disgrace their history, and defeat every end and purpose of her soundest policy, and most essential interests.

I hope you are a bad prophet about the non-payment of the King's debts this session. Do it, if you love me;

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do it handsomely, and good-humouredly, if you mean that I should thank you. I cannot afford that you should be in the right on that head. I am poorer than the poorest cousin of Job's kindred; yet (like all beggars) I have the spirit of an Emperor. Apropos of Emperors. My Emperor is now galloping to Paris, where he will both surprise, and be surprised to a *great degree.* I'll lay you a wager that not three people in France form any just ideas of his character; he is so totally unlike a Frenchman, above all, a French monarch. Remember, I tell you, that this journey will not lessen his good opinion of John Bull and his children. My little colony have behaved like angels here, during the whole winter, and everybody does them justice.

Andrew, my excellent Andrew, left me (you know) ten days ago, and carried with him my warmest esteem and friendship. Thank Bob in my name, for his kindness in leaving his son so long with me. I am morally certain that he will have no reason to repent it, by any part of his son's conduct hereafter, either as a man of the world, or a man of business. Oh! how happy should I be to spend a fortnight this summer with them both, at some of those hospitable castles, the difference of which I know, and you don't, from the Gothic châteaux, which I have the option of visiting in state and ceremony!—You Englishmen know nothing of this universe but its jollity! You have no notion of the trammels of dulness and dignity!—But I am a happy man in every part of the world, where I find true friends; and here, as elsewhere, I enjoy that treasure! God *bless you, my dear Chamier.*

P. S.—A Frenchman has just told me, the Emperor would have a *grand succès* at Paris. *Le fat!*

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND.

Vienna, June 2nd, 1777.

THERE cannot be a better, a kinder, nor a more welcome letter than yours of the 13th May, and I thank you for it, my dear Andrew, with all that cordiality which is so firmly established between us. You have given infinite satisfaction to your friends, by returning to them the same ingenuous, cheerful, and unaffected being they had always known you; and in that point you have gratified my wishes to the full, as much as theirs. I reflect with pleasure upon the twelvemonth you passed abroad, and that pleasure is doubled by the assurance you give me of its having made the same impression upon your mind. In that short space you have seen a considerable quarter of Europe to advantage, and many of the first people who act the principal parts in it. You have laid up a treasure of ideas, together with the pleasing remembrance of many worthy people, and of many personal kindnesses, which must (in so good a heart as yours) add to your general love of mankind; and now you return without the smallest dash of foreign vices or follies, to enjoy the blessings of your own country and government, which (without despising others, or supposing that an honest man may not live comfortably in many other countries) you know to be the happiest and most eligible in all its circumstances of any under the sun.

Thus far I may flatter myself that you have been a gainer by our joint peregrinations; and now let me tell you, my dear Andrew, in the openness of my heart, what I am certain of having gained by your stay at Vienna: the consciousness of having done my utmost to acquit a debt of affectionate gratitude towards a family of excellent feelings; the conviction of having added to

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their esteem by these proofs of zealous friendship; and above all, I have acquired the steady and invaluable attachment of a young man upon whose truth and generosity of sentiment I would most gladly rely in all the most trying situations of fortune; and in whose cheerful society I hope to pass some of the most agreeable years of the evening of my life.

There's the state of our accompt, my dear Andrew; strike the balance, and own to me that my speculation in bringing you out of England has turned out both a wise and advantageous one. Your future success in life will greatly add to my gains; for I shall have an hundred opportunities of saying, with a degree of honest pride, "that same Andrew Drummond, of whom all the world speaks so well, was my messmate and my *pupil!*"

This letter is still a good deal in the style of a *Mentor;* but here I lay down that office, and only reserve to myself the privilege of giving you the frankest and fairest advice my mind is capable of, upon every occasion when your friendship shall demand it of me. God bless you my dear Andrew; you have an hereditary right to be a happy man, from all your principles, your opinions, and your connexions. I have delivered your messages to all your most intimate friends here—they were received as you could wish. I trust you will still keep a warm corner of your heart for Vienna.

Your's affectionately,

R. M. K.

SIR JOSEPH YORKE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 5th, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

You have long been threatened with what now happens to you, that of being importuned with a recommendation of my nephew, Mr. Yorke, who, I hope,

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will spend some months at Vienna; at least, as far as my voice goes, he shall, though as he has many uncles, they may think otherwise. I flatter myself you will not find him quite unformed, or uninformed; and beg you will take him under your protection. Tell him frankly what he should or should not avoid, and I am persuaded you will find him docile. He has lived near a year and a half under my roof, and I never saw him pout once, but always gay and active, as well as prudent, though I laid the bridle on his neck. Everybody loves him here where he has behaved himself well, and I shall wonder if he changes for the worse, in still higher and better company. He has gone through his studies with credit, and has taste, and therefore may apply to his exercises. I have recommended riding and fencing especially; the latter he likes, and is an adept at. In short, you may, I think, produce him in good company without that awkward feeling which we often have in our career. Though we have no design to give him a governor, as he will be soon of age, we have found for him a companion on his travels in a sensible, worthy man, a Lieut.-Colonel Wetstein, whom you may remember in the Swiss guards here. I beg leave to recommend them *both* to your kind attention; but don't let them *bore you*, as I know you are *overloaded* with recommendations.

Your friendship to Mr. Yorke, will be a link more in that chain which binds me inviolably and affectionately to you,

Ever, dear Sir, your faithful

JOSEPH YORKE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, August 26th, 1778.

I HAVE been so much occupied for this fortnight past, in the way of my profession, that I have not been able to thank you sooner for your welcome letter of the

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4th instant. I will own to you, my dear Yorke, that your long silence had begun to make me uneasy, though I was too just towards you to imagine that you could so soon be guilty of neglecting a correspondence which you had undertaken with pleasure; which could alone keep up your connexion with a man, who loves you very sincerely, and who has promised himself the satisfaction of following you step by step, through the most dangerous years of your life. I need not tell you, therefore, how welcome that letter was to me, nor how much I was pleased with the account of your tour, and of the kind reception you met with at Milan. Count Firmian is certainly one of the most amiable, as well as hospitable of men, and the obligations he heaps upon our countrymen are without measure or end. I am glad you had an opportunity of satisfying his taste for English literature, by procuring him a copy of Lord Hardwicke's late publication. It is a fortunate thing for a young man in your situation to find himself able to make some sort of return to such favours as those you have received from Count Firmian. You will, I am afraid, be more sensible of their value, after you have made the tour of some of the largest cities of Italy, where I am assured that hardly a shadow of the Milanese hospitality is to be met with.

May you, my dear Yorke, be laying in a stock of useful and entertaining ideas, for the advantage of your future life; while Sir Joseph and I are much less agreeably employed in watching the effects of those passions to which sovereigns are not less subject than the middling classes of the people in the nations they rule over.

You and your companion are often mentioned here, and with kind remembrance. I wish it were compatible with your projects to pass part of next winter at Vienna, but of this I dare not flatter myself. Wherever you go, my dear Yorke, remember that it is your duty to prepare

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yourself for an active life, and that much is expected from you by a family, which has distinguished itself by producing men of sound judgment, extensive learning, honourable principles, and possessed of the laudable ambition of rendering themselves useful to their country. You will disappoint that family and me most egregiously if you fall short of those recent examples which your grandfather, your father, and all his brothers, have set before you.

Adieu, my dear Yorke; you are accustomed to hear me preach upon the *application* of the years of life upon which you are now entering. You know that upon the proper employment of them, must, in a great measure, depend the success of all your future years, and you will forgive my resuming so often the style of a pedagogue, when you recollect that it is dictated by the warmest, and most inviolable friendship. I beg you will assure Colonel Witstein of my sincere esteem and regard. Write to me soon, and believe me ever yours most faithfully,

ROBERT MURRAY KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 3rd, 1778.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Andrew, for your long epistle by my servant. It did not contain much satisfactory news from home, but that was no fault of yours. The times were *abominable*, and I do not wonder at every honest man who feels and thinks as you do, being almost sorry to sit down to describe them. May I not hope that they are now much altered for the better, and that all will turn out in the end, to the honour and advantage of poor Old England, who has indeed been hardly dealt with by many of her children, both abroad and at home! There exists not a John Bull who has that wish more earnestly at heart

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than I have, nor one who would do more to forward its accomplishment. I beseech you, therefore, my dear Andrew, to double your diligence till affairs are more in the way of national exertion, and steady perseverance. I am not unhappy enough to harbour a doubt of honour and success, from the moment our resources are employed *as they ought to be*. We in Germany are drawn up in battle array, and with such magnificent armies as the sun never shone upon. But all sides are averse to war, and I see good reason to hope that with mutual good temper, and fair explanation, matters may yet be made up in an amicable manner. May the same blessing befal us with our American children, and then, my dear Andrew, huzzah! I think we shall give our petty intriguing neighbours such a ratification of *their* American Treaty as they will remember for half a century to come! Don't imagine that I mean to let them off, whether our American peace-makers succeed or not. No! Master Andrew; their late proofs of *friendship* must have a suitable return. I must tell you, for my own satisfaction, and that of my *intimate friends*, a pretty trick they wanted to play me here. Within these ten days, the Court of France have been trying with *all their might* to get an American agent introduced to the Empress Queen; though under the denomination of a *gentleman traveller only*. Nothing ever was more indecent than such an attempt, nor more disrespectful to their Imperial Majesties, whose sentiments in regard to the rebels, and whose friendship towards the King are equally well known. However, France sticks at nothing to support the iniquitous cause she has espoused, and if Mr. Lee (the person now here) had been admitted to the Empress's presence, under any shape, they would have built a thousand false stories upon that single circumstance, and have made the Americans them-

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selves, and all distant nations, believe whatever might suit their own purposes.

I have the satisfaction to assure you, that the Empress Queen has made known in the most dignified, as well as peremptory manner, her determined resolution to give no countenance whatever to such an emissary, nor to admit him by *any means* into her presence. This decisive rebuff is a great mortification to France, which her ministers have deservedly drawn upon themselves, by venturing to make an attempt, as injudicious as unbecoming.* This first proof of the Empress's justice, as well as regard for the King, will be highly agreeable to his Majesty; you will easily judge how much satisfaction arises from it to me. The merit of the whole transaction is with their Imperial Majesties, and their upright Ministers; my share in it is only to have foreseen the event a *twelvemonth ago,* and to have taken proper measures to defeat it. Perhaps you may have heard all this before from Cham; but at all events I meant well by this detail of it. Give me in return some good news; I stand more in need of these than tongue can tell! I can hardly guide the pen, my fingers are so tired with scribbling!

Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR NATHANIEL WRAXALL TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Florence, April 17th, 1779.

MY DEAR SIR,

I feel myself so happy and so honoured, in the permission of correspondence with you, that nothing except the hurry incident to travelling could prevent me from addressing you much oftener. In revenge,

* The spirited exclusion of the emissary from Prince Kaunitz's *soirée* by their female president has been elsewhere narrated.

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Manners and I talk of you at least ten times a day. 'Tis not possible to think of Vienna, without seeing you in every company or situation. Two winters which I had the happiness to pass under your protection, and almost in your constant society, form too strong a *liaison* to be easily broken, particularly when gratitude adds its force to respect and attachment.

We have now been three months in Italy, and have had too much reason to ascertain the justice of your prediction, that "we should find much for the eye, but little for the heart." We have been, as you know, at Naples; I was much more pleased with Naples than with Rome. Its position, its environs, its volcanoes; the islands of Capua, Ischia, and Procida, scattered on the sea; its picturesque landscapes, and the celebrity of the surrounding country in Roman history and fable —all these circumstances conspire to charm the mind, and warm the imagination. We went to Baiæ, to the Cape of Misenum, to Pompeii and Stabiæ, to Herculaneum, to Portici, and to Cumæ. We visited Lake Avernus, the Acheron, the Lucrine Lake, the Cave of the Sybil, by which Eneas descended to Hell, and the Elysian Fields. All is still (after eighteen centuries, and earthquakes, and repeated volcanic eruptions) very much resembling Pliny's and Strabo's and Virgil's descriptions.

The Queen of Naples very much exceeded in person, in elegance of manners, in accomplishments, in understanding, my ideas of her. She is inconsistent, *inconsequente*, and capricious in her conduct as a woman and a queen; but she is much superior to the people who surround her, and were she well advised, is unquestionably capable of being useful to her subjects.

I told you, I think, of our charming journey through Styria, Carinthia, and the Tyrol. We only stopped a day at Verona, at Vicenza, and Padua. At the last

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place we went to look at Wortley Montagu's tomb. By order of Lady Bute, Mr. Strange has erected a little monumental stone to him in the cloisters of the Augustine Convent, and under the inscription is a small fish, alluding to his end. We were both much pleased with Venice. It rises as by enchantment from the waters, and we were never tired of admiring its beauty. We merely *saw* the Doge; a fine looking man for his years. He is said to possess good qualities, but has many enemies. Madame Foscarini is very handsome. She said, when I saw her in her gondola for a few minutes, and delivered the ambassador's letters, that she should set out soon for Vienna. *Apropos* of that word, we talk of you perpetually, and of your dinners, and your claret, and of everything which *Vienna* suggests.

We are infinitely indebted to you for your recommendation to Sir Horace Mann, who has treated us with the utmost civility and attention. We made only a very short stay at Bologna and Ferrara, and shall shortly go on to Rome; though here we are already burnt alive, and the Arno has not a foot of water in it; and they say it is worse at Rome and Naples. We have passed two or three mornings with the Venus de Medicis. She is one of the very few things I have ever seen which rose above my expectations. I am astonished how marble can be so beautifully perfect, and am sure you would think as I do. All the upper portion of the figure seems alive, and more resembles flesh than marble. I am unable to find anything like an imperfection in her; the head and face are of a heavenly beauty; but all this you have heard before at least an hundred times; and so you have how much I love you, and feel indebted to you for all your goodness. Continue to me your protection and your friendship; and believe me, your ever affectionate and obliged,

N. Wraxall.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

DEAR YORKE, *Vienna, June 7th*, 1779.

Your letter from Turin gave me infinite pleasure, as it leaves me no doubt in regard to your perfect recovery. The air of Switzerland, and the affectionate care of Colonel Wetstein and his family, will complete your cure. Your gratitude towards Colonel W. is extremely well placed, and it has been matter of real satisfaction to me to find that Doctor Congalton (for whom I have long entertained a sincere esteem) has deserved so well of you by his skill and attention. The experience you have acquired in this long and dangerous illness, will have proved to you, my dear Yorke, that a zealous friend is an inestimable treasure; and that the best claim we can have to the kind offices of others during distress or sickness, must arise from our generous and candid behaviour towards them in times of health and prosperity. I myself gathered this useful lesson, and nearly at your time of life, from the unreserved attentions of my brother officers towards me, during a very tedious illness; and I have loved mankind the better for it, and felt myself more desirous to fulfil all the offices of friendship ever since. It will make me very happy to hear that your native air, and the kindness of your numerous friends, have removed every vestige of your long and dangerous illness.

I have often told you, my dear Yorke, that I know no young man who enters into the world with so many advantages as you do. I am persuaded that on your return to England you will be more and more convinced of the value of those blessings which you are born to enjoy. May every step of your life add to their efficacy, for the public good, and your own private

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happiness! You have rank, affluence, and the partiality of the whole nation secured to you by inheritance. You have truth, honour, and patriotism strongly impressed upon your mind by education, and by the example of all your relations. Every road to consideration and contentment is open to you: you are master of the choice. But remember, that, with all these uncommon advantages, you may fall very far short of that happiness which I most sincerely wish you, unless you keep up with unwearied perseverance that activity, both of mind and body, which can alone secure to you health, and the means of filling up your time both usefully and agreeably. I would not purchase the wealth of India by the sacrifice of my love of occupation; and I would rather never see a coach than be deprived of the pleasure of walking out. Don't imagine, my dear Yorke, that I mean to set myself up as a model; but I give you my example, among five hundred others, to prove that the art of being happy depends more particularly upon the talent of banishing *sloth* and *ennui*, than upon any other circumstance in life.

And here ends my sermon; you are accustomed to my style of preaching, and you forgive it, because you do justice to the motive which dictates it. Be a useful and active member of society; cheerfulness and comfort will be found at every hour within the circle of your own family; and no man living will rejoice more sincerely in your success than I shall do. I hear your name mentioned with great kindness in my favourite society, and am charged by them with every good wish. Believe me, with inviolable attachment, your faithful friend,

R. M. Keith.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 12th, 1779.

I AM afraid, my dear Andrew, that some cursed captain of a Dunkirk cutter, is now amusing himself and family with the perusal of a score of my letters from my friends in England; and Heaven knows that in these moments of impatience and anxiety, I would sooner spare the captain the last hundred pounds I am master of. Sad times indeed! Not a line from home since the 21st of May! My last grain of patience is well nigh exhausted. Where is our friend Grant? Not broiling in St. Lucia, I hope, in that inactivity which little suits his temper or our circumstances? Should that unfortunately be the case, I should, from my heart, pity him, and the brave corps which is under his command! I wish they were well back on the Continent of North America, where Clinton would know how to employ them to good advantage. Clinton is an admirable fellow! * His forces, I am afraid, are but scanty; yet I flatter myself that his campaign will go a great way towards breaking the neck of rebellion in America.

The French talk much upon the Continent of invading you this summer. They may, perhaps, land a handful of men in some distant corner of the kingdom, or vex

* It is pleasant to find that this opinion (founded on joint services in Germany) was mutual. Mr. Eden (afterwards Lord Auckland) thus writes a short time previously :—"Everybody who has seen you at Vienna speaks in the highest (though the justest) terms of the respectable figure you make there, and of the honour which, in every sense, you do to your country. General Clinton, among others, (though he does not know you intimately) spoke of you in the warmest manner; and made the party with whom I met him at Lord Buckingham's (Lord Barrington, and your friend the Solicitor-General, &c.) regret much that there are no means of proportioning the appointments to the *merits* of the ministers. Yours, in that case, should be at *least* ambassadorial."

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you with an attempt upon Ireland; but I hope that no man of sense in England can ever dread any serious consequences from the common bugbear of invasion, even if our flippant neighbour should strain every nerve to attempt one. Tell me, my dear Andrew, all you know about this and a thousand other interesting articles. I have not seen the colour of your handwriting since Admiral Arbuthnot set sail to go to the relief of Jersey! That was a pretty exertion of the Gallic power, and met with the fate it deserved!

I wish you with your military spirit, could feast your eyes with the sight of those noble and spanking regiments of infantry, and cavalry, which are passing this way every day, on their return homewards. What say you to regiments of infantry, three thousand six hundred men under arms? and corps of cavalry of at least two thousand each? May I live to see these fine fellows, once more joined to a handsome corps of John Bulls, and hastening to pay the French for all their double-dealing! If the choice of an enemy were left to the Austrian troops, I imagine they would gladly give the preference to the French, who, indeed, have used them very scurvily. But all these are only political dreams, which, alas! have no appearance of being realised in *our* days. The more's the pity!* *Apropos* of John Bulls, I am forlorn and childless beyond all former example. But I expect the two Norths, and Brydone, in three weeks, and they shall be made most welcome. Tell Lord North so in my name, and in *expressive terms*.

* Their joint occupation of Paris, did not probably enter into the writer's wildest and most sanguine *dream*.

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PHILIP YORKE,* ESQ., TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR, *London, December 8th*, 1779.

You will do me the justice, I daresay, to believe the repeated reproaches I have made myself for not having written to you since my arrival in England. Four months have now elapsed since my return to my *Penates*, which, though I was very far from being weary of travelling, or remaining abroad, produced in my mind the most agreeable sensations. The first idea that struck me in my journey from Harwich to London, and which I shall always remember with pleasure, was the air of happiness and content that appeared on the face of everybody I met; very different from what a foreigner would expect to meet with, from the gloomy exaggerated accounts he reads in our own newspapers, or from what an Englishman observes in those countries which are now so obliging as to *pity us*. It is true that taxes are high, and are likely to increase; but I hope they will be borne with cheerfulness; for the only way of lightening them hereafter, is to strain every nerve in order to get the better of our powerful enemies. I have learned, or at least I wish to persuade myself, that I have learned, from you and Sir Joseph Yorke, to view things in the most favourable light. I am sorry to find that essential part of character, to our own and others' happiness, so rare in this country. Everybody seems to despair of

* Afterwards Earl of Hardwicke. The patriotic and truly British sentiments expressed in this letter (and in every page of a lengthened correspondence) continued to actuate this excellent nobleman throughout a life, divided between the most active exercise of social and domestic virtues, and strenuous exertions in the service of the country he loved; first, in both houses of the British Legislature, and afterwards as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, during a period of extremely critical agitation in that distracted country; his popularity with both parties in which bore testimony to his rare prudence and moderation.

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our getting through our difficulties; and I look upon this despondency as the worst symptom of the times. I have attended the debates in both houses since the opening of the session, three or four times; and as far as hearing several good speeches could give me pleasure, I received the highest entertainment. Lord Lyttleton's speech the first day was certainly an able one for his party; but it tended to increase the flame in Ireland, as well as others that have since been spoken. Lord Stormont is one of the best speakers in the House of Lords, which, considering the little practice he has had in public speaking, and the time he has spent abroad, is rather extraordinary.* But I have no idea of Demosthenes, Cicero, Lysias, or Hyperides surpassing the eloquence of the Chancellor.† His speeches on the first day of the session, and on Lord Shelburne's motion respecting Ireland, were the most powerful I have any conception of, and both times called up Lord Camden to answer him. Lord Shelburne made the Chancellor a compliment at the expense of Lord Bathurst, in saying he had restored the dignity of the place he occupied.

In the debates of the House of Commons, a vulgarity prevails that is highly unedifying. To give you an instance of it, I need only quote an expression of Temple Luttrell's, the first day of the session. Abusing the ministry for the campaign of last summer, "You have trusted," said he, "altogether to Providence; Providence has been your *Mungo here, Mungo there,*" &c. In former days, a member would have been reprimanded for so low an expression, which falls little short of blasphemy. In the course of his speech, he made quick transitions from this low and familiar style, to the sublime; in one of these he was going on, "Have ye

* His lordship had been chiefly absent on foreign missions; having preceded Sir R. M. Keith at Vienna, and afterwards been ambassador at Paris.

† Lord Mansfield, uncle to Lord Stormont.

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not enough, have ye not enough?" &c., when somebody sitting behind him, answered, "Yes, quite enough," and stopped him in his career for a couple of minutes. I will not trouble you with any more remarks on the debates, which you will have seen too fully, and too partially stated in the papers; which so obligingly communicate to all Europe, whatever reflections a member of parliament may throw out, and add to the inveteracy of our enemies, or to the indifference of our lukewarm allies by some unjust or ill-timed sarcasm. But the mischief done by those daily libels is not merely confined to our general foreign interest; they even foment disputes between individuals at home; witness the duel between Adams and Charles Fox, which was entirely owing to an expression of the latter, exaggerated in Almon's paper. If the ministry were less timid, they would, I think, have taken some notice of Almon for publishing the King's speech the morning *before it was spoken;* and put in, as given to him by a friend, who had heard it read at the Cockpit the evening before. It is believed by many that Lord North will go out this winter; indeed, from the ill-humour that reigns against him, and the uncommon violence of opposition, which sticks at *nothing*, I should think that his situation must be singularly unpleasant.

Lord Lyttleton's death afforded matter of conversation for a few days last week. Various reports have been spread as to its immediate cause, but I hear it is well attested that he had a dream three days before his death, in which a woman in white appeared to him, and predicted the event within that time. This he told the next morning to Mrs. Flood, his relation, who was then, with other company, at his house. Some people are absurd enough to believe that the ministry *poisoned* Lord Lyttleton, and hired Mr. Adams to cut Fox's throat! I suppose, if any of the ministers were brought

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to the block, the same gentlemen would be obliging enough to undergo the ceremony in their stead, *car il n'y a qu'un pas de plus à faire.*

Having talked to you so much of this, I must just say a word of myself. You can have no idea how much I should like to be with you this winter at Vienna, and you will say, "then, why don't you come?" But this scheme is now rendered impracticable, as I shall come into Parliament much sooner than I wished. Sir John Cotton is so ill as to be obliged to resign his seat, and Lord Hardwicke is extremely desirous that I should come in for the county of Cambridge. Indeed, if I lose this opportunity somebody else must be chosen; and when I stand at the general election, I shall incur the odium of disturbing the peace of the county; whereas if I am chosen now myself, that odium will fall on my opponent, and I shall be the person *attacked.* On the whole, it is better for me to come in rather earlier than might have been desirable, rather than to have no object or occupation for three or four years of my life. On the score of my Italian fever, I mean to avoid the bad hours of our London life. As to clubs, I have a great aversion to them,* and always remember with pleasure, your excellent advice about that sort of life. They have no temptations for me, and I trust never will. In all times, and all places, I shall ever remain,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful friend, and obliged, humble servant,

PHILIP YORKE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

DEAR YORKE, *Vienna, March 3rd,* 1780.

I am ashamed to have delayed so long to answer your letter of December 8th, which (I say it

* The clubs of that day, be it remembered, of which gambling formed a prominent feature.

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without flattery) was a very striking picture of the times, though not a pleasant one. You, my dear Yorke, are one of the very few young men, who, with a sagacity very uncommon at your age, can look upon the pursuits of one half of mankind, and the childish amusements of the other, with a good-humoured indulgence; yet with a firm resolution to keep clear of both. The House of Commons, as it is now constituted, and with that spirit of licence and disorder which many of its principal orators breathe, both within and without doors, is become a second edition of Broughton's amphitheatre; where, in my early youth, I have seen many bold muscular fellows, who might have done honour to their country, or bled nobly in her cause, demean themselves so far, as to cut and slash one another, without any real cause of quarrel, or any other ambition than that of carrying off the largest share of the pence collected at the door, or thrown upon the stage, by the giddy multitude. I am not one of those who think it unfair to bait a minister; on the contrary, I think a *premier* the best and most proper of all wild beasts for that sport. But I own that it appears to me the height of cruelty, as well as madness, to tie Old Mother England down to the stake along with him; and to turn loose upon both all the Bourbon and American bull-dogs, in hopes of creating glorious mischief and universal confusion. Make haste, my dear Yorke, you and a score more of my Vienna lads, to get into St. Stephen's chapel; and bestir yourselves in rescuing the worthy old lady from being pulled to pieces, at the instigation of her frantic children. Set her once fairly on her legs again; keep foreign curs at a distance from her dwelling—and then (in God's name,) take any minister, or any half-dozen of placemen you please, and hunt them down in whatever manner may best amuse you. I shall rejoice in hearing of your sport, though in all

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probability, it will not be in my power to be an eye-witness of it, as the indispensable duties of a foreign mission can hardly be made compatible with those of a member of Parliament.

I have, in justice to my constituents, let them know that I shall not expose them at the general election, to the continuation of the inconvenience they have felt, for several years past, by the absence of their representative. A better (because a more useful) servant of the public will take my place; and my only disappointment will be that of not being able, in person, to applaud the manly and disinterested principles which several of my Vienna pupils are prepared to play in the House of Commons. But I am filling my paper, while I have a thousand thanks to give you for the very welcome token of your remembrance which was delivered to me some weeks ago. The antique is very pretty, and I need not tell you that it will go with me to my grave. Let me hear often from you, my dear Yorke, and believe me, ever most cordially, your friend and servant,

R. M. KEITH.

PATRICK BRYDONE,* ESQ. TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 9th, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

I well know how much you must be alarmed at our present tumults, and although you will probably have more particular accounts of them than any I can give you, I will not lose the opportunity of telling you at least, that we hope they are now happily subsiding, and all will be soon quiet again.

As I have only half an hour till the post goes off, I

* The celebrated traveller in Sicily, to whom English readers are indebted for the first acquaintance with the grand and picturesque features of Mount Etna. His version, at the moment of a different conflagration, it was thought might be acceptable.

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shall not go back to their origin; that you already know, as well as the violent proceedings of Tuesday last, at both Houses of Parliament, where many of the members were very roughly used.* A great mathematician, who has been calculating all his life, assured me he had computed the numbers which marched from St. George's Fields, and that they were at least 30,000. The streets were every where filled with them, and many were already armed with clubs. On that night they burnt down Newgate, and several private houses; Sir George Saville's and Lord Mansfield's of the number. Most of his valuable MSS. were consumed. The justices who presumed to act, were immediately doomed to destruction, and their houses burnt or pulled to pieces. Lord North's house was attacked about two in the morning, with flambeaux and faggots, but a very few of the light horse who were placed in the square, charged full gallop down the street, and they were dispersed in a moment. On Wednesday they were exceedingly tumultuous, and a proclamation, approaching nearly to martial law, was issued in the evening. They had set fire to the King's Bench, New Bridewell, the Fleet, and many private houses: the appearance of all these fires in different quarters was very tremendous. Many parties of the Guards were sent, but when it was too late; for all these buildings were entirely consumed.

* "It is hardly possible (writes one who was present) to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the house exhibited. Some of their lordships with their hair about their shoulders, more of them as pale as the ghost in Hamlet, and all of them standing up in their several places and speaking all together. Lord Mansfield came in with his wig dishevelled; the Archbishop of York had his lawn sleeves torn off, and flung in his face. The Bishop of Lincoln's carriage was destroyed, and himself taken, in a fainting fit, into a house; the Duke of Northumberland was robbed of his watch and purse, and Lord Sandwich narrowly escaped destruction."

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As Lord North's house was threatened with a second attack, I went to assist in defending it. We had several false alarms during the night, but to our disappointment, no attack was made, for we were well prepared to receive them. About three o'clock the two great parties of the Guards returned; Sir J. Wrottesley said he had marched across St. George's Fields, passed the King's Bench in flames, and attacked near the river a large body of the rioters. They were not in the least afraid; having persuaded themselves that the soldiers would not fire on them. On the first discharge, they dispersed, and he chased them with bayonets, which completed the rout. Many of them had loaded a boat with powder, and were going off; he fired on them, and killed the greatest part; the rest leaped into the water and mud, and were stifled. Col. Leake, who commanded the other party, marched to the Fleet, where they were very riotous. Possessed with the same infatuation, they would not stir, till the bayonets touched them. He charged them, and they were immediately dispersed; leaving, he thought, upwards of 100 killed.

Next morning I went over all the ground, and found the numbers had been much exaggerated. Two attempts were made on the Bank, and many of the wretches were killed. Not one of the soldiers of these parties was hurt. I went through the whole city yesterday, and saw very little disturbance; they have retired to lurking places, and I do not believe they will ever dare to come forth again. The consternation, however, was universal, and all the shops were shut at five o'clock. Blue flags were flying from every house. Parties of the Guards were sent to pull them down; and to tear the blue cockades from every hat. Many made resistance, but at last all complied. I observed the people in all quarters were arming themselves for their own defence;

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and, perhaps, it may not be so easy to make them disarm again. Guards are placed at the houses of all the Cabinet Ministers, and some others. We have now about 10,000 troops in London; and as they are dispersed in every quarter, cannot, I think, be in any kind of danger. If the officers could have acted at first, without the civil magistrate, all would have been prevented; but the justices knew they would be sacrificed.

This day all has been quiet. A few wretches have been taken, and some put to death; and I suppose they will be hung up or shot immediately, there being no prisons left to confine them in. Indeed, they have not had severity enough, which, at the beginning of such tumults, would have been the truest mercy. I am told they are now determined on vigorous measures. A privy council has sat for many hours this evening; and I believe they are sending Lord George Gordon to the Tower at this very instant. I think they should have sent him to Bedlam long ago. You would not know London, were you to see it at present. Patroles and reliefs are constantly passing through every street; and encampments in both the parks. The Parliament does not meet till Monday the 19th, as it cannot exercise its functions under martial law. What an opportunity for an enterprising P—! It is believed that the poor enthusiast, Lord George, has been only a cat's paw, though unknown to himself, in this affair. There are reports of commotions in the country, but I hear totally without foundation; and I do not believe that even the present rioters will assemble in any numbers. There will be a violent push to repeal the act, but I hope they will not be weak enough to comply. Lord George told his people on Tuesday, that it would be repealed; on which they committed all these outrages. If anything remarkable should happen, I shall take the liberty of writing; but here is the bellman at the door. Our

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compliments to the ladies at Vienna, for whose health and welfare we make vows and libations after dinner. I have the honour to be, with the sincerest respect and attachment, your most obliged servant,

PATRICK BRYDONE.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, June 28th, 1780.

I NEED not tell you, my dear Andrew, how much I was afflicted and depressed by all the shocking accounts which were received from England within the last ten days. Neither shall I attempt to paint to you the shame, as well as sorrow, with which I heard of those atrocious outrages committed by a fanatical mob against those ministers of peace whom foreign powers have sent among them, and whose persons and habitations ought to be peculiarly sacred, both in the eye of public law, and common sense. Such barbarous excesses would dishonour a nation of savages. May they be the last of the kind to disgrace our annals! and may the wisdom and firmness of Government provide hereafter in the most effective manner, for the support of the law of nations, and of legal order throughout every part of the British Empire! Even these melancholy convulsions may be turned in some shape to the advantage of the public, if a proper use is made by the Legislature, of those salutary lessons which they afford. God grant it may be so! we have need of such a reformation, and of a steady hand to effect it.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear friend, for your several letters, during these abominable disturbances; and particularly for that postscript to the last of them, which gave me the first news of Lord George Gordon's being sent to the Tower. That welcome piece of news was still very doubtful here, by all the letters of the 9th,

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which had reached Vienna; but I stuck to *your* information, and you will judge how much I was obliged to you for it. Let the law have its full course with that mad enthusiast; and be you the first to tell me that his punishment, and that of every traitor who was deeply engaged in that horrid plot, have avenged the laws of England, and the honour of our government. Pray, my dear boy, give me every ray of light you can as to this mysterious business, and send me every clever print or publication it may produce. I don't mind a few guineas of expense on such an interesting occasion. Will not some of the leaders of opposition see the errors of their late conduct? and make up for them hereafter by supporting government? If Rodney and Clinton would afford us a couple of handsome gazettes, we should still hold up our heads, and laugh at the Bourbons.

The interview between the Emperor and Czarina succeeded so much to the satisfaction of all parties, that these two sovereigns set out together in the same carriage for Smolensko. There they parted on the 11th instant. The Emperor went to Moscow to pass a few days, and from thence he proceeds to Petersburgh, to make a second visit to the northern Semiramis. May much good result to humanity, from these repeated meetings! This monarchy, and that of Russia, ought to live in good harmony and connexion with each other.

Your friend, Madame de Thun, and her eldest daughter dine with me to-day, along with Prince Kaunitz. The Pergens are in the country; Madame de P. desired me to thank you for your postscript, which sent Gordon to the Tower. You would like the Vienna people still better than you do, if you knew how much they take to heart all our late distresses. How does Chamier? I am most anxious till I hear that all the fatigue of the last painful fortnight has not prevented

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his recovery.* Adieu, my dear Andrew; be assured that every line you write in these perilous times is a real obligation to

Yours ever most cordially,
R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD STORMONT† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, July 11, 1780.

DEAR SIR,

Though I happen to be a good deal hurried to-day, yet I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of thanking you most sincerely for your very affectionate private letter of the 24th past.

The attack intended, or at least threatened, against my house did not take place, but I was wounded much more sensibly than I could have been by any personal outrage, by that offence to Lord Mansfield, the consequences of which might have been dreadful indeed.‡ But I thank God his health is not in the least affected, and though he feels severely the loss of all his valuable

* Mr. Chamier being Secretary to the War Office, would necessarily be much harassed by the sudden assembling and encamping of troops.

† Secretary of State, and nephew to the venerable judge.

‡ When the prisons of Newgate and Clerkenwell, the Fleet, the Marshalsea, and the gaols of Southwark were emptied of their felons, the houses of Sir John Fielding, Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Cox, magistrates for Middlesex, were plundered and burnt. The dwelling of the Lord Chancellor was saved by posting in it a few soldiers; but the abode of Lord Mansfield met a different fate. Furniture, books, and pictures, and what was a still more irreparable loss, his manuscripts, formed during a long and active, a judicial and political life, all were sacrificed to the brute rage of the rabble. The amiable Chief Justice escaped by a back way, and wrapped in a cloak, arrived at the door of a friend, requesting admittance.

A private letter to Sir R. M. Keith, written during the events, estimates the loss in books, MSS., bonds, and valuable papers, belonging to himself and others, in Lord Mansfield's house at 40,000*l.* The general damage to the city of London from 600,000*l.* to 800,000*l.*

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manuscripts, yet, upon the whole, he shows a wonderful calmness and serenity.

Cruel as this loss has been, yet perhaps the appearance he made in Parliament the first time we met, after the dreadful outrage, is so far an alleviation, that it has added to his fame, by placing him in a point of view in which he never could appear before. To rise up at such a moment, quite unprepared (for he had not the least intention of speaking that day), and with a calmness and precision equal to any he had ever shown at any time, to place the law of his country upon several great and important points, and that, too, in such a manner as to force assent from those who are not willing to give it, is perhaps *un trait unique* in the history of the human mind.*

The public tranquillity seems now perfectly re-established, yet I still suspect there is a strong latent wish to disturb it again. Whether we shall ever be able to trace this conspiracy to its source, I know not. That the evil was not accidental, but has a root, and a deep and foul one too, I firmly believe. Adieu, dear Sir. I repeat my sincerest thanks for all your partiality and friendship, and ever am

Your most faithful, humble servant,

STORMONT.

* The sentiments of Lord Mansfield (whose opinion has ever since been regarded as constitutional law) claim the utmost attention, and the consideration of his years and sufferings in the late tumults, added to the interest with which he was regarded. In proffering his opinion (which accurately illustrated the question, and disembarrassed it from all previous doubts) he avowed that he had formed it without having recourse to books; adding the pathetic exclamation, "*Indeed I have no books to consult!*" All his auditors seemed to deplore the loss he had sustained as a national misfortune and disgrace.

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MRS. MONTAGU* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

August 25th, 1780.

SIR,

I am afraid that since the time of Ulysses, to this very day, though a long interval, there have not been many travellers whose object it has been to see cities and men, with that attentive observation which could render them worthy to be introduced to the acquaintance of the most distinguished men, and to an advantageous recommendation to the most august cities. However, if I had not been convinced that Mr. Meeke had the best views in his travels, I should not have encouraged his going to Vienna, and less still should have made it my request to Sir Robert Keith to have afforded him the great honour and advantage of his protection and countenance. What does Mr. Meeke more honour than my good opinion, is that of the University of Cambridge, where he was educated; who, hearing his intention to go abroad, without his solicitation, conferred on him what is called a travelling fellowship; by which it is plain they think him not only capable of improving himself by travel, but of bringing home some addition to the public stock of learning and knowledge. I hope, therefore, to be excused the liberty I have taken, in giving him this address to your Excellency.

I must confess that I envy one who is going to visit Vienna. Where can one see a man who is as great when he lays aside his title of emperor, as when he

* Mrs. Montagu, whose defence of Shakespeare against the aspersions of Voltaire, and other productions, gave her for many years a high literary reputation. Being present at the French Academy at the reading of the invective, "bearing (says Walpole) all the marks of passionate dotage," and being asked by another French academician (Suard) whether what she had listened to had not given her some pain, she wittily replied, "By no means, as Monsieur de Voltaire is no friend of mine."

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appears under that august title? and a woman, as good while she exercises imperial power, as those you read of in the histories of pious saints and spotless matrons? Their Imperial Majesties are determined to show, that their personal merit renders them superior to the highest elevation the institutions of this world can bestow.

If there should be any commands in London that I can execute, I beg you will intrust me with them. If you think any of our new publications worth your attention, I shall be happy to show on that, or any occasion, with what regard

I am your Excellency's
Most obedient and most humble servant,
ELIZABETH MONTAGU.

As a *pendant*, or, rather, contrast, to this somewhat *pedantic* epistle, from the original leader of the *Blue Stocking coterie*, may be given another celebrated correspondent's more feminine communication :—

MRS. PIOZZI TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, 1780.

SIR,

It shocks me to be troublesome to you about such trifles; but the people of the custom-house at Franckenmark, seized some furs of mine, which, though old and much worn, were of particular value to me, because they were my mother's. They took, at the same time, a satin gown, half made up, some crape, to make me a cap on the road, and three hanks of thread, that my maid worked with. For this offence, Mr. Piozzi paid fifteen zechins. Mr. Piozzi hoped to have at least his money restored, but I believe that too is *contraband*, for the Abbé Trenti writes us word, that without the goods, we cannot see the guineas. The former, we hear, are detained at the frontiers, for want of an ambassador's

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protection. I therefore take the liberty to beg for the honour of your instructions; what we ought to do what we ought to hope, and what we ought to pay, for having carried to Vienna an old fur petticoat, purchased in this town just thirty years ago, and half worn out before it came into the possession of, Sir,

Your very obedient and very humble servant,

HESTER PIOZZI.

MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR ROBERT, *Park Place, 30th Aug.*, 1780.

I had so long and kind a letter, so deserving of my utmost thanks and attention, that I feel myself the most idle and ungrateful of wretches, in having made no answer to it. You desire me in it to write soon, and often! You see I am fair in stating my delinquency, nay, I will go farther, and state the whole of it; 'tis a punishment I deserve! The Parliament sat indeed an endless time, and was a very troublesome one—but it has long been over, and I have as little to plead in my favour as possible. The only shred I can find to cover my shame, is drawn from your own letter, where I find a confession of similar delinquency. I have owned, and again own my fault however, and though I remind you of this, I do not mean to excuse myself, or accuse you; but 'tis my last poor *redoubt,* from whence I do not dream of defending myself, but barely to hope for terms, such as your generosity may grant; and pray give me that consolation soon.

You say a thousand true and excellent things upon the state of political affairs in our unhappy country. I feel as you do, the utility and necessity of all kinds of peace, *mais le moyen?* To be "angry and sin not," is of all, I believe, the hardest lesson among men. You say "Parliament should correct faults and punish

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crimes:" but that "peace at home is necessary, to make vigorous war, or procure peace abroad." True —but how to correct faults, or punish crimes, and yet keep peace at home? Opposers say, "the country is undoing daily by bad measures;" supporters say, "do not obstruct the operations of government." If a doctor ordered poison to his patient, or a surgeon proposed a fatal amputation, and they were to say, "Hush! let us alone! don't disturb us in our measures, and all will go well"—must the poor patient die for peace' sake? I myself am but a miserable tame politician, contemned by the warm and vigorous ones for that sneaking vice called candour. Yet I really have, I think, seen an unjust and unnatural war, unnecessarily begun, obstinately persevered in, and very miserably conducted. I could not quite have the optimism of the good *Candide*, and say all was for the best! Yet opposition is *faction* in all its shapes! to find fault is to discompose, and indeed it does so; for those you find fault with are angry, if you are not. There is, it would seem, no differing without squabbling, nor finding fault without giving offence; and the dilemma of peaceably-disposed and unambitious men is sometimes great, in certain situations.

I certainly, in my little sphere, have blamed sometimes; because I have thought that to make Parliament a mere register of ministerial decrees, or simply the banker of the nation, and make no distinction between right and wrong, was of two evils the greatest. But I have neither promoted county meetings, nor mad associations, nor signed petitions, nor remonstrances; nor been for botching the constitution by short parliaments, and equal representation. I see defects in our constitution, which is an excellent piece of patchwork, but I don't know how to mend them. The Parliament, I am afraid, would not if they could,

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unless they are mended themselves; and *I dread the heavy hand of the people in such operations.* What I have been most hurt at was to hear constantly those who were supporting those parliamentary measures by which the war was begun and continued, as freely condemning them out of the house, in all conversations, as they who opposed them; and that could not but be mortifying and provoking to one, who thought his vote and conduct in Parliament a serious duty, not a mere farce, and who thought he saw from the first day, all the horrors and dangers of this unfortunate war, and believed they might have been avoided. My prophecies are upon record; facts have too fatally verified them; and I can only say that having little ambition, and a very simple zeal for the prosperity of my country, I most cordially wish I had been as much in the wrong, as I certainly was in the right.*

We have lost three islands, and, I doubt, thirteen provinces. I wish Ireland may be as secure to the dominion of this country, as those provinces might have been; and after spending sixty or seventy millions, I doubt we are now evidently struggling against a superior force, after contriving to shake off everything we could ever call our ally. I will dwell no longer on this odious subject. Providence or our better Genius may perhaps avert these evils. There is such a tide in the affairs of men, its refluxes are sometimes sudden and extraordinary, and of all things the most uncomfortable and unmanly is to despair!

I am, therefore, not for yielding dishonourably, but for more exertion, and so I have long been; and I

* "Marshal Conway (says Walpole) carried his motion for a pacification with America, by a majority of nineteen. His speech was full of wit, spirit, and severity; and Mr. Fox complimented him publicly on this second triumph, he having been the mover of the repeal of the Stamp Act."

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must say for myself, and those I have oftenest agreed with, that though condemning the war, I have never opposed any of the means for carrying it on. I hear nothing of late of that mischievous madman, Lord George Gordon. Amidst some harm he has done, he may, perhaps, have the accidental merit of checking, by the absurdity of his insurrection, a *mobbish spirit of reformation*, which I think might have made our bad business worse.

Lady Ailesbury sends kindest regards.

Ever your faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, October 14th, 1780.

WHAT the devil is the matter with Old England, my dear Andrew, that she has lost every grain of her ancient spirit and perseverance? The absurdities with which every paper has been filled since the arrival of General Dalrymple from New York, and the mean-spirited despondency which one half of our fellow-citizens display upon the least untoward accident, are to me constant sources of shame, as well as sorrow. I find it a hard matter to hold my head as high as I shall ever wish to hold it, amidst a score of foreign ministers who, (upon the faith of our own representation of the situation of our affairs) look upon the faithless Bourbons as the very lords of the ascendant. What have these Bourbons done? what are they about to do, which ought to give them a just claim to that ascendancy? We ourselves must continue for a length of time to *betray* our own cause, to dishearten our own fleets and armies, to *crouch* under a burden which our forefathers would have supported most manfully, ere it can be possible for such a nation as ours to lose its weight and consideration in Europe. Bitter foes and false friends,

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have brought us, indeed, into imminent danger; but we have still a fair field before us, and a cause so manifestly just that if we are true to ourselves, Heaven will certainly assist us.

You see, my dear Andrew, by this solemn preamble, that I am stung to the quick by the last letters from England. I pray of you, therefore, to ransack all London, for such good news, or at least well-founded expectations, as may enable me to stem with honour the torrent of falsehood and presumption with which the Bourbons are preparing to overflow all Europe. I had almost said that in so doing you will render a service to the public; for my situation here makes the game I have to play of some importance. But at least you will render an essential service to an old and trusty friend who serves his country with a warm and assiduous zeal, which in these pusillanimous times is not without some share of merit.

I have read with great pleasure the list of new members of Parliament. No less than six or seven-and-twenty of my Vienna lads will sit in St. Stephen's chapel; and they, *I trust*, will strive strenuously and successfully to set old dame England upon her legs again. They will at least give her ladyship fair play, and not permit a parcel of ungrateful children to smother her with the cushions of her own feather bed.

Give me news of the brave Rodney; he has kept up the honour of our navy amidst a thousand dangers. Will not Darby give us a tight bout soon with that blustering and mongrel commander, D'Estaing? So Darby is going to victual Gibraltar! If so, they *must* meet. Adieu, my dear Andrew—a word, a *cheerful* word; it will be worth a king's ransom to yours ever,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, 1*st Dec.* 1780.

It is with sincere grief that I sit down to acquaint you, my dear Anne, with the very great loss this country has sustained by the death of the Empress Queen, which happened on the evening of the 29th November, and has thrown this whole monarchy into the deepest affliction. The Empress began to complain of a violent cold, attended with a cough and oppression in breathing about the 18th. No danger was apprehended for several days; but from the morning of Saturday last, all the symptoms became more alarming, and the disease was supposed to be a dropsy of the chest. The tender affection and care with which the Emperor and all the children of the imperial family attended their mother through her whole illness, were highly exemplary, and endeared them more and more to all the subjects of Austria. Her Imperial Majesty took the most affecting leave of them all, and continued to exert her benevolence and charity in a great many instances; and showed, to her last moments, that piety, fortitude, and resignation, which had so eminently distinguished her whole life. No sovereign was more justly, nor more universally regretted, though every person in these kingdoms is persuaded that all that is great and good is to be expected from her successor.

I need not tell my sisters how much I share in the general sorrow, nor that my hands are full of business at the commencement of a new reign, which must be an object of great attention to every Court in Europe.

The Empress's danger increased so rapidly, that I could not write to my private correspondents by my servant, whom I dispatched to England a few hours after her death. I am certain that the news will create

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many painful feelings wherever it is carried. The body will be opened this morning, and we shall know the real name of the fatal disease; and the burial will be on Sunday evening. All public diversions will be suspended for the whole winter, and those young folks who thirsted after the pleasures of a long and gay carnival, will be greatly disappointed. For my part, I lose nothing by the suppression of public shows, and my only wish is to see my chosen friends in tolerable health. December 2nd.—The Empress's body has been opened, and the fatal disease appears to have been *induration of the lungs*, and suffocation, the consequences of excessive corpulence. The burial will take place to-morrow evening, and with less pomp than usual, according to *her last will*. Her humility has gone so far as to forbid every sort of funeral oration. She has thought of everything and every body in her testament; has made provision for her younger children, left pensions and tokens of remuneration to all her faithful servants, and ordered a month's pay extraordinary to be distributed to the whole army.

In short, my dear Anne, the late reign has left a most striking and edifying example. May the new one be equally glorious and less chequered by the vicissitudes of fortune! I have written so much during the last four days, that my fingers almost refuse to hold the pen. I have only to add my hearty service to all the sisterhood and Aunt Bab. I expect great things from America, if dissension does indeed display itself among the rebels. Adieu, my dear friend.

Ever yours most cordially,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, January 1st, 1781.

I BEGIN my new year by the most affectionate wishes for the happiness of the sisterhood, and aunt Bab.* Health and contentment be your constant companions, together with that relish of life which doubles all its enjoyments. I am well and hearty, notwithstanding such a load of business as few men could go through without assistance. My young secretary is full of docility and attention; but since the hour he came into my house, I have had such constant and indispensable occupation, that I have not been able to teach him the mechanical part of the profession; so that all his good will is of no avail to me. However, I never grudge trouble, when it can forward the public service; and my sisters will be glad to learn that I have in the full and most flattering approbation of *all* my superiors, repeated upon fifty occasions, and without reserve, the best reward of my labours which I can possibly desire. This I say with real gratitude towards my sovereign, and his confidential servants, who treat me with so much kindness and indulgence. The present situation of Europe, and particularly of Great Britain, calls for the zealous exertions of every honest man who holds a public employment; mine are both hearty and assiduous. May Heaven render them useful! So much by way of preface to a busy year; and, I hope, a prosperous one.

This capital is what it ought to be, after such a loss as the nation has sustained. We are employed in recapitulating the exemplary life of the deceased sovereign, in blessing her memory, and in following, with just encomiums, every wise and paternal step of her illustrious

* The nonagenarian sister of his father, before mentioned.

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successor. He is a man of very superior abilities, joined to that unweared application to the duties of his high station, which are, to his subjects, sure pledges of the justice and beneficence of his reign.

I wish I could find time to tell you a few of the well authenticated anecdotes which relate to the Empress's death; as I am sure you would agree with me in thinking, that no Roman matron, or Romish saint, ever met her dissolution with *as much* calm fortitude as Maria-Theresa. One I must mention, as it will do good to the hearts of the sisterhood. From the moment that the Empress found herself in imminent danger, she seemed to forget the sufferings of a painful and deadly disease, and employed every minute in arranging the affairs of her kingdoms, in explaining her intentions relative to her family, her friends, her servants, and even her own interment. This she did with a presence of mind truly astonishing. After several days, in which her beneficence had had its full scope, she found such difficulty in breathing, that she could no longer enjoy a moment of rest or ease in bed. As she sat in her chair, she inclined her head back, and seemed inclined to slumber. One of her women arranged the cushions round her dying sovereign, and asked in a whisper, if her Majesty would compose herself to sleep? "No," said the Empress, (raising herself,) "I *could* sleep; but Death is too near; and I must not let him *steal upon me in that way*. I have been preparing for his approach these fifteen years, and I am resolved to look him in the face without fear or horror." And she did so; for she ordered her physician to give her notice aloud when death was at hand, and she employed her parting breath in thanking Heaven, and blessing her people, and her children. Peace be with her manes! She was a good-hearted, a generous and magnanimous Princess, as any one who ever did honour to her sex, and to humanity!

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I am sure you thank me for this anecdote, which I give you for your private satisfaction, and that of my cronies, and *intimate friends*. God bless you all.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, January 20th, 1781.

DEAR YORKE,

The knowledge I have of the essential good qualities both of your head and heart, prevented me from attributing your unusual silence to any other cause but that of your troublesome and tedious election business. I saw with *real satisfaction* the happy issue of it; and though I regret that the contest led you into such an enormous expense, yet I shall think the money well employed, if it has fixed your family interest in the county upon so solid a foundation, that no Jew or Christian Crœsus shall dare hereafter to attempt to overthrow it.

Your own character, my dear Yorke, and that kind attention which you will always be disposed to show to your constituents in their private concerns, will soon make you the friend of the county; and I know no situation in life more truly respectable, than that of an independent member of parliament, to whom a whole county looks up, not for dirty jobs, but for the candid and efficacious support of their just claims upon Government. May you long enjoy the pre-eminence of that situation, with every delightful feeling which belongs to a humane disposition, and a clear conscience!

In politics, I have long, in my own imagination, marked out your line, my dear Yorke. Truth, independence, and application will guide you through every step, till you arrive at that well-earned esteem and national consideration which enlarge the means of doing

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good,* and are undoubtedly the most valuable prizes which a man of good sense and moderate ambition can ever wish to obtain. I would not see you at the head of the Treasury if I could; I love you too well to wish you ever to barter the heartfelt contentment and domestic happiness for which nature has formed you, for all the fame, and all the power of the most envied minister of state! I imagine that Sir Joseph Yorke will be in England before this reaches you. You know, my dear Yorke, from how many motives of attachment and gratitude I must ever take the warmest interest in all that concerns one who has honoured me with his friendship for more than four-and-twenty years. I have pitied his situation for the last twelve months, in a country from which integrity and gratitude seem to have taken their flight. I was prepared for many dirty tricks on the part of those mean-spirited and faithless republicans; but my idea of their turpitude did not go so far as the late instances of their folly and falsehood have shown that they *can* go. Sir Joseph has acted the part of a true friend to Holland, and to the Prince of Orange; it must gall him exceedingly to find that by words, and *unwearied* example, he has preached so long *in vain*. But he has his recompense in the testimony of his own conscience, and in the full approbation of the King, and the whole nation. May the fate which the Dutch deserve bring them soon back to a sense of their errors, and the hearty desire of repairing them, and may Sir Joseph be their political saviour!

Our Emperor has behaved like an angel ever since his accession, and shows such assiduity and superior talents in all the duties of his high station, that his subjects, and all Europe, may promise themselves much

* A prognostic fully realised, in the Chancellorship of the University of Cambridge, and Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland; offices discharged by the Earl of Hardwicke with the most universal approbation.

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good from his reign. The first seven weeks of our mourning (which lasts six months) being over, we hope in a few days to be allowed to pay our court to him, for the first time since the lamented death of the Empress Queen; and I shall carry into his presence, along with the sincere good wishes of all the English nation, as much personal veneration and attachment* as any one of his subjects. Adieu, dear Yorke; honour and happiness attend you!

R. M. K.

[*Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Jan. 13th, 1781.

Joy and comfort be with my excellent Drummonds, male and female, and with all the *Gang*, in this *lively* and *decisive* year, and in many following ones. I have no wishes more ardent than those I offer you all, and it grieved me to be obliged to send Wiffin to England two days ago without charging him with them. But, my dear Andrew, I am, and have been for several months past, the *veriest slave* that ever tugged at the political oar, and without *a soul to assist me*. How, and to what purpose I have rowed, let my superiors tell, and if I help to bring the vessel safely into port, no creature within the bounds of your blessed island will be happier, or more contented than myself. My superiors load me with kindness and commendation; they treat me with that confidence which marks sincere esteem; they reward me in the way of all others which is the best suited to my feelings and disposition; but as to *fortune*, my dear Andrew, I never cared much about it, and nobody else seems to bestow a thought upon what Keith's circumstances or his claims are. When I say *nobody*, I mean of those who hold the loaves and

* The feeling was mutual on the part of the Emperor Joseph, throughout his life.

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fishes; for I know that my private friends, my chosen and trusty few, are more solicitous about my fortune than I am. But I will not tire you with grievances which I defy to disturb my peace of mind. I have my recompense in my own breast, and in those of my friends; and if the distributors of good things remain unmindful of an old and faithful servant, because he has too much honest pride to become a *teazing dun*, *tant pis pour eux!* they have worse hearts than mine, whatever their heads may be.

I am the busiest man in Christendom, and shall be the most contented, if the government put in execution their talked-of idea of sending my *fast friend* of upwards of thirty years, Sir Joseph Yorke, to help me in my negotiation. But when the time may come (if ever) for such an appointment, depends on the events of war, and the capricious, as well as insidious politics of our Bourbon enemies. Sir Joseph is one of the oldest and most intimate friends I have in the world, and his nomination would be to me the most *welcome* event; because I am certain that neither he, nor those who send him, will seek to suppress what little share of merit I can already justly claim on my own bottom. Thank God! there is not a more disinterested man in Great Britain than myself; but justice must be done to me, for the honour of the Clan Keith.*

Adieu, yours ever,

R. M. K.

* That honour could not be better promoted, nor the character of one of its most distinguished members better elucidated, than by this *confidential* expression of his *inmost sentiments* upon a point where a more selfish or interested person might have felt differently. The rumoured conjunction with him, in the negotiation for a general treaty, of Sir Joseph Yorke (rendered convenient and desirable from the peculiar intimacy of the latter with the intricate Dutch affairs), had been viewed by some of Sir Robert's friends (among others Marshal Conway, to whom it dictated two most affectionate and *brotherly* letters) with a sensitive feeling of jealousy on his behalf, from which it will be seen that he him-

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MR. RIGBY* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Pay Office, Jan. 21*st*, 1781.

DEAR KEITH,

My porter tells me that your messenger arrived from Vienna on Thursday last, and returns to you in a few days. It would be unpardonable in me not to take this opportunity of a safe conveyance, though I have little perhaps to tell you. I hope this courier from you brings good tidings from the Emperor, of a friendly disposition to this country, which at this hour is in a state it never found itself before. I must begin by assuring you that since my friends Gower and

self was totally free; lest the honour to accrue from the successful termination of hostilities should be in any way shared by another. Lord Stormont, who from congenial delicacy of character seems always to have appreciated him, perfectly knew this when he wrote :—

[*Private.*] "*St. James's, March* 30*th*, 1781.

"I was *very sure* that his Majesty's intention of joining Sir Joseph Yorke in the future negotiation, would be *highly agreeable* to you. It is a great satisfaction to the King, if this great work does go on, that the business will be conducted by two ministers, who are so closely united in friendship, and who will vie with each other in talents, activity, and zeal. It has, of course, always been his Majesty's intention that you should both be on exactly the same footing, and have equal treatment in *all respects*. But neither of the appointments can take place until it is known that the Bourbon Courts have accepted the mediation."

That the idea was at the time relinquished, is matter of history; but Sir R. Keith's strenuous previous efforts were highly appreciated.

* Richard Rigby, Esq., Secretary to the Duke of Bedford, in Ireland, and afterwards paymaster to the forces. His convivial qualities, for which (as well as great readiness and spirit in debate) he was celebrated, are thus described by Mr. Wilkes :—"Mr. Rigby has generosity and spirit, he is an excellent *bon vivant*, amiable and engaging. Mr. Rigby has all the gifts, and gambols, and flashes of merriment which set the table in a roar, though the day after a cruel headache may succeed. I should like to spend all my days with Mr. Pitt, but I am afraid that at night I should often skulk to Mr. Rigby and his friends."—*Butler's Reminiscences.*

To the above, Mr. Rigby united the more sterling qualities of sound sense, great goodness of heart, and warmth in the service of his friends.

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Weymouth withdrew themselves, and particularly since the death of poor Chamier, (which I can never enough lament,) I have not been in habits enough with any of the King's servants to know more of their secrets than I do of those of the ministers at the Court of Vienna. I don't covet the contrary; preferring the situation of an *unresponsible* paymaster to any other I could have under existing circumstances.

Our new Parliament, from the little specimen we have yet had of it, seems at least as well disposed to support government as the last. Not that I think them over fond of the ministers; but that numbers of them detest the opposition. This party, perhaps the most respectable one in this kingdom at present, and which is a very numerous one, I call the opposition to the opposition; who despise the ministers, but hate and detest their antagonists; and by their strength and support this ministry stands, and bids fair to remain; more especially, as added to this circumstance, the opposition are split and divided amongst one another to such a degree, that Shelburne and Burke keep no bounds in their abuse of each other. Nor even do the Rockingham party hold the same doctrine upon the material article to be brought into Parliament from the Yorkshire committee, of shortening the duration of Parliaments, and introducing one hundred new knights, for *counties*. Sir George Savile is to go those lengths: Lord Rockingham and Burke hold back. These circumstances will explain to you the present state of those parties. As to the ministers, they remain, as usual, totally unconnected with each other, depending and relying wholly upon our royal master. The Chancellor grumbles and goes on. Wedderburn begins to grow impatient with his inactive situation of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and with the smallness of its income, not sufficient, it seems, to support the

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splendour of nobility. We have not seen the Advocate* this session; and I hear he has been too ill to come from Scotland yet. In a full House, and a warm debate, we shall have occasion for his eloquence and spirit! I live much, and in great cordiality with the Drummonds, who are the best people in the world. I tell Bob he is of the party I describe, as opposition to the opposition, which is his case. Harry is a better courtier, for he has one of the best contracts that ever man had, and I rejoice that it is so.†

I imagine we are not likely to see you soon at home. I own, without flattery to you, that I am very glad you happen to be at this time at the Emperor's ‡ Court. I am not politician enough to know if it is in his power, should it be his inclination, to step forth a friend to Great Britain; I only know that we want him. Whether news is come from Petersburgh, or whether it be favourable or hostile, you are much more likely to know than I am; as well as whether we have friends enough left in Holland to persuade the Dutch to cry *peccavi*, as some people report is the case.

Jan. 29th.

Since I began this letter, the King's message has been sent to both Houses, notifying the Dutch war; and 101 members of the House of Commons, together with a few peers, have condemned the measure. What passed in the House of Lords confirms my account of the state of parties; for Shelburne and Camden affectedly disclaimed all political connection with any party or parties whatsoever.

Our fleet is to sail for the relief of Gibraltar

* H. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville.

† This lucrative contract the Messrs. Drummond resigned, that their parliamentary conduct might be *unfettered*.

‡ Joseph the Second, whose recent accession rendered his sentiments extremely important.

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immediately. I wish for a sea-fight, even at a disadvantage of numbers; for nothing puts the people of this country so much (nor in my opinion so justly) out of humour, as these inactive naval campaigns. I can't help telling you that your friend Wraxall spoke incomparably well in the debate on the Dutch war. He had matter enough for a *dozen speeches*, good elocution, with a tolerable voice. But he gave the House *too much*; for he has not sat there long enough yet to know that knowledge and good sense don't make their way so well in that place as confidence and abuse.*

And now, my dear Keith, after thanking you a thousand times again for all your goodness to my nephew, you will be pleased to hear that I am very well satisfied with him. He is a well-bred, good-humoured, pleasant gentleman, as free from vice as I could wish to see him. He never games, the rock upon which all the young men of fashion split and are cast away. I allow him 1000*l.* a-year; he comes and goes to Mistley as he pleases; in short, we are on the best terms. Excuse, if I bore you about him. Yours, ever,

RICHARD RIGBY.

* Wraxall, whose *début* is thus leniently, if not favourably mentioned here, is said by later correspondents to have utterly disgusted the House by the lengthiness and wide range of topics embraced in his speeches. Their reception, and discursive nature, are thus characterised in one of the wittiest of the *jeux d'esprit* called "Probationary Odes," in which the matter and manner of the speakers of the day are held up to ridicule:—

"Murrain seize the House of Commons!
Hoarse catarrh their wind-pipes shake,
Who, deaf to troubled learning's summons,
Rudely coughed whene'er I spake,
* * * * * * *
I burn, I burn, I glow, I glow,
With antique and with modern lore;
I rush from Bosphorus to Po,
From Nilus to the Nore!"

It has been mentioned, that though a lively narrator in point and in

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ., ON HIS MARRIAGE.

Vienna, May 12th, 1781.

SHE is the very woman! the handsome, untainted, warm-hearted woman I had so long marked out in my own mind for you; and you are the happiest man in Christendom, my dear Andrew; and you will be long so, because both you and sweet Lady Mary* have right heads, as well as warm hearts. You are both made for domestic happiness—you know its value—you have a competency and fair prospects, and your blood has not an icy particle in it! *Ergo*, my young friends Andrew and Mary shall be as happy as the day is long; and, Heaven knows, I not only applaud but share their happiness.

I congratulate Bob and Tatty, and Bess and Harry, and Lady Egmont, and your bride, and *myself!* Why did you not tell me the precise day of your nuptials, my sweet boy Andrew, that I might have made it a holiday in my household? Every living creature would have celebrated it with joy, for every body loves *Dru, dru*, and sends a million of wishes. The Thun is delighted with your marriage—so *are all;* the Pergen says you are such a husband as she wishes for her daughters; the Hoyos whispers, "que Lady Mary *est une femme fort heureuse!*"

Here comes a d—d fellow with a long paper, which I *must* read. Lord! Andrew! let no *child* of yours ever be bred a politician; it is all buckram and stay-tape, and not one man in a hundred knows the true secret of the trade. I will tell it you in two words—be honest, discreet, and active; prove to mankind they

conversation, his letters are too common-place to have afforded room (with one exception) even for extract here.

* Daughter to the Earl of Egmont.

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may trust you, and they will! My politician grows impatient: I *must* throw down the pen; but first let me embrace the clan Drummond, *including* Lady Mary, with whom I have been in *love* these *six* years! Write to me, you dog, or I shall—pay my devoirs to her ladyship *in person*. And now to the business of Europe! Yours ever,

R. M. K.

The patriotic disinterestedness with which, while sympathising with the "hopes deferred" of his "six-and-eightpenny" brother veterans, Sir R. M. Keith was content to wait nearly twenty years for another regiment (his own having been disbanded in 1763), was amply rewarded by the terms in which official and private friends hailed the tardy appointment. His principal thus notifies it:—

LORD STORMONT* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, Oct. 12th, 1781.

DEAR SIR,

I have no matter for an official letter to-day; but I cannot omit the earliest opportunity of congratulating you upon the distinguished mark of his Majesty's favour just conferred upon you, by appointing you to the command of the 10th regiment, vacant by the death of General Sandford, the news of whose death arrived only *the day before yesterday*. This event must give the warmest pleasure to all your friends, but to none more than to your most faithful humble servant,

STORMONT.

Lord Frederick Campbell thus writes on the occasion:

"This post has given me the greatest pleasure imaginable. How I rejoice to hear, my dear Sir Robert

* Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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Keith, that you are *at last* at the head of an *old* regiment, and in Great Britain! Though the dogs will insist on having breeches, (which was not always the case,) yet Snip may cover your myrmidons well, and not suffer the colonel to be a loser. I hope now to live long enough to see you rich, your estate improving, and yourself one of the happiest of creatures, *at home*. Lady Frederick joins me in many a good wish and heartfelt congratulation on the present occasion.

"Yours, my dear Sir Robert, most faithfully,

"F. C."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Nov. 3rd, 1781.

My best thanks to you, my dear Andrew, for your hearty congratulations upon an event which was equally necessary in point of finance and of comfort. The value of this favour has been greatly enhanced by the very gracious expressions which accompanied my nomination, and the very friendly part which Lord Stormont and Lord Amherst took in what concerned me. I know how all my Drummonds feel on the occasion, and my gratitude is quite *at home* among them. I cannot add a grain to my zeal for the public service: it has long been carried to the utmost pitch of my abilities; but I shall seize with double pleasure every opportunity that may present itself of acquitting a part of the debt I owe to my country. She had need of more successful servants than I am; but I defy her to have any one more assiduously or more cheerfully active than I am in every possible exertion. So much for self—now for public news. I hate all those indecisive actions, like this last, off the Chesapeak; and I pray Heaven that Digby, with his reinforcement, may have determined our fleet to make another and speedy attack upon de

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Grasse; else I shall be greatly in pain for brave Lord Cornwallis. I am glad of Johnston's capture, for his sake, and for the effect it will produce at Amsterdam; and the arrival of so large and rich a fleet of East Indiamen will no doubt be a well-timed support to the Company and the national credit. But it is not *money* we want (you see I speak like the colonel of an *old* regiment), but *blood* for our money (as John Bull used to say); for how the devil do you think we can make a *peace* for you till you have shown that you can make war in the *old British style?*

Yours, R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, Feb. 27th, 1782.

THE winds and weather are against us, and to the most vexatious degree of obstinacy, and Heaven knows what is going on in Old England since the 5th of February! The loss of the English mails of the 1st, has put me in a blessed humour, but you would like me worse if I bore it with more philosophy. The only piece of good news I have heard is, that Guichen had not sailed from Brest on the 10th instant. This will give our brave Rodney a month's start of the Bourbons, and I trust he will make a *decisive* use of it. If this year deceives my expectations, I fly to the convent upon the top of the Calenberg, from which the useless monks are to be *sent away*, and it will make a noble retirement for a disappointed politician, who will have had a surfeit of his troublesome and fruitless trade.

Before I withdraw to my hill, I am, however, resolved to gaze with all my eyes at the strangest of all sights, the Pope of Rome in the streets of Vienna! His Holiness seems to add to the fervent zeal of an officious missionary, a certain share of holy *obstinacy*, which induces him to carry this strange project into execution

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against much good advice, and the frank declaration that his eloquence *must* prove ineffectual. He will be with us soon after Easter; but if he will appear in his own, or in a questionable shape, is not yet known. I shall behave to him as the most civil and well-bred of all *heretics;* and if any relation of yours has any private request to put to his Holiness, I think I can promise you its success. If you and Lady Mary stand in need of the Pope's blessing, say the word, and you shall be blessed accordingly. Joking apart, there never was so singular an event as this pilgrimage, and you may be assured that it will take place. May it breed no ill-will or mischief!

Why will not you and Lady Mary take a trip to the continent, and come and see your trusty friends at Vienna? You are well assured that you would be made as heartily welcome here as in any city in Christendom. I have some English dames here already, who go very pleasantly on. Lady Derby, and Mrs. Campbell; Mrs. Hamilton, and Miss ——; these last belong to the heir of Abercorn, who is a sensible and agreeable lad. I have my sweet Lord St. Asaph, and Lords Morton and Bread-albane, all of whom will do honour to the peerage. But never more shall I have such a colony as that you saw here. My love to every one of them that come in your way.

What are they going to do with my regiment? where are they going to send it? I give my ready consent to any place except the cursed Sugar Islands, the climate of which makes me shudder. But I know nothing about regiments or anything else. I am a famished plenipo, and know no more about English matters than the Pope's coachman, who is now greasing his boots for the German journey. Tell me every scrap of news, and *quickly*. Yours,

R. M. K.

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[*Private.*]

LORD STORMONT* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

St. James's, March 27th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

I cannot content myself with writing you a mere official letter upon this occasion. Your own observation upon some late events will have led you to expect the revolution which took place *to-day*, and which, I think, will long be memorable in the annals of this country.† I shall not, especially in a letter by the common post, hazard any opinion, either upon the causes or consequences of this revolution.

As to what relates to myself, I have the highest reason to be pleased with the distinguished marks of approbation with which his Majesty deigned to honour me, when I was to resign the seals. He spoke of my endeavours in his service, in such flattering terms as I cannot allow myself to repeat. Before I entered upon my late employment, his goodness had placed me in such a situation that I had nothing to ask or desire, but the continuance of his favourable opinion.

I cannot doubt that my successor will do the same justice I ever did, to your distinguished zeal, ability, and talents, which his Majesty frequently mentions, and always in terms of the highest approbation. Will you be so good as to take a proper opportunity of presenting my best respects to Prince Kaunitz, and of repeating my thanks for the very obliging manner in which he has often spoken of me to you. I shall ever remember it with equal gratitude and pride. Nothing can be so flattering to me as the approbation of a man who is at once the object of my highest veneration and

* Sir R. M. Keith's predecessor at Vienna; and up to this day his Principal in the Foreign Office. † The change of ministry.

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tenderest attachment. Adieu, dear Sir. I shall hope often to hear from you, and ever am, with the sincerest regard, your most faithful, and humble servant,

STORMONT.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, April 3rd, 1782.

I AM in a blessed situation at this very moment, not knowing who is, or may be a week hence, minister of England. Every body questions me about English news, and I am ashamed to own that I am as much in the dark as they can be. Let us but have an *efficient* and a *vigorous* ministry, my dear Andrew; whether my friends, or the men I have seen in opposition to all their measures, provided Old England is a clear and permanent gainer by the change. Let us but save the honour and interests, the dearest interests of the country that bred us; and let me be placed in the most obscure corner of it, I care not a button.

Next post *must* bring me at least a ray of certain daylight. The total ignorance in which I live is painful beyond measure; and at the same time the little remnant of consideration amongst foreign nations we still had, is lost by this shilly-shally business. May Rodney and Hood be doing something manly in the West Indies, whilst the sons of Britain are worrying one another at home. We are our own most dangerous enemies, that is certain. I sent home to-day by estafette some very good news which came overland from India. We receive more political and *soi-disant* patriotic nonsense in one week from England, than would serve us sober Germans for a twelvemonth.

We are preparing for the second visit of the Russian Princes, and shall show them such an army as eyes never saw, and clever Italian operas into the bargain.

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Will this not tempt you out of your turbulent island? And yet, I am sure, the madness of the times must make it almost *uninhabitable*.

You know the Pope has been here these twelve days. He is a comely, venerable, and affable old man as ever I saw. I paid him a visit in his *closet*, without committing my public character, and he received me as if I had been the ambassador of a Catholic crowned head. I never saw any man have a more becoming public deportment, and his public functions at the high pontifical mass at the cathedral, on Easter Sunday, and afterwards, when he gave his benediction to the public, in the great square opposite the Jesuits' church, were truly edifying. Yet I trust, my dear Andrew (this to yourself alone), that he will carry away, when he leaves us, a fortnight hence, the highest opinion of the Emperor's hospitality, together with the conviction that no prince in Europe possesses better or more steady principles.

I send you inclosed, a small print of him, pretty like; though he is handsomer, and of a tall, fine, manly figure. Present it to your mother, with my best compliments.

Yours, ever affectionately,

R. M. KEITH.

It was not to be supposed that an event so unprecedented as the journey of Pope Pius VI. to Vienna should not find a place in the correspondence, from that usually monotonous city, of Sir R. Murray Keith. His notices of it, however, and of his personal interview with the pontiff, being, though graphic, as usual, rather brief—it may not be irrelevant (at a time especially when the papacy, from the accession to it of another Pius, equally energetic, though far wiser than his brilliant, egotistical predecessor, occupies more than its usual share in the attention of Europe) to compress, from the amusing pages of a French memoir

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writer, some of the leading motions and incidents of what Sir Robert so justly designates—a "singular pilgrimage:"

"John Angelo Braschi, though his talents and activity were admitted during the life of his patrons, Ganganelli and Clement XIII., owed his elevation to the pontificate (like his modern namesake, and several of their most distinguished predecessors) chiefly to the idea of his absence of all pretension to it, and to the factions in the conclave, which forbade unanimity in favour of any one of the declared candidates.

"He was not, at first, popular, though endowed (according to the character drawn of him by no partial hand) with the precise qualities which usually constitute a popular sovereign; showy talents, a fine commanding person, dignified manners, easy and flowing elocution, as enlarged a mind as could consist with the rigid principles of his vocation, and a tolerably enlightened taste for the fine arts.

"Impatient, irascible, obstinate, and open to prejudices, he yet never showed himself perseveringly vindictive or intentionally unjust. In less difficult circumstances, and with means proportioned to his views, he might perhaps have passed for a wise ruler. But he had an excessive passion for fame, which proved the principal source of his errors and misfortunes; such a craving for renown as, when not united to strength of mind, is apt to degenerate into puerile vanity. It was his paramount desire to immortalise his pontificate, and associate his own name with brilliant undertakings; and his self-love, thus prominently brought forward, drew on him frequent mortifications.

"Sprung from a family scarcely noble, he laid himself open from the time of his accession, by attempts to illustrate his race, to the pasquinades of those most pitiless of mockers, the Italian populace. To the *two*

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winds, which constituted his sole (and surely singular) family arms, he had added an eagle, fleur-de-lys, and stars. This pompous escutcheon was thus mercilessly analysed by his wit-loving subjects:—

> Redde aquilam imperio, Francorum lilia regi,
> Sidera redde polo; cætera, Braschi, tua.*

"The erection of the tasteless though costly sacristy of St. Peter's drew down upon him more of those popular philippics. Not only was the remark applied to it made by Apelles on a contemporary painter's Venus, that, not being able to make her beautiful, he had at least made her fine; but on the principal front which bore the inscription—'What the *public voice* called for as an ornament to the Vatican, the sovereign pontiff, Pius VI., has undertaken and accomplished,'—was found subjoined this indignant contradiction:—

> Publica! mentiris. Non publica vota fuêre,
> Sed tumida ingenii vota fuêre tui.
>
> Thou liest! the public wish was never consulted,
> Thy only counsellor was thine own vanity."†

---

* Restore the eagle to the empire, to France her lilies, the stars to the heavens; the residue, Braschi, is thine own.

If the perpetuation of those arms, and of his own name, a thousand times repeated, on every monument in whose erection or repair he had the slightest share (at the cost, it is said, of 200,000 Roman crowns) was an object worthy of prosecution, it is attained; and while Rome itself stands, the name of *Pius Sixtus* will exist with it.

† Whatever of truth, however, may reside in the epigram, and however dearly the *Popolo Romano*, so often pompously invoked and mercilessly fleeced, may have paid for his munificence, the traveller at least will bless the memory of him who collected and displayed for his benefit the treasures of the Vatican.

Two other of the squibs called forth by his restorations and their consequences, may amuse the modern visitor to Rome. When he had raised, at an excessive expense, the obelisk on Monte Cavallo, in a season of scarcity, public opinion manifested itself in the text from Scripture, "Command that these stones be made bread."

At another period of famine, when the vain-glorious inscriptions,

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If to this overweening desire of admiration and distinction, we add the rare personal advantages which contributed to foster it, we shall not be at a loss for human motives (apart from his really sincere, though mistaken hope of arresting by his eloquence and influence the ecclesiastical reforms of the Emperor Joseph) for Pius VI.'s ill-advised journey to Vienna. "He was," says the writer already quoted, (a *liberal*, be it noted, of the true French school), "one of the handsomest men of his time. He united a tall, striking figure, features equally noble and pleasing, and a brilliant complexion, which age had hardly been able to impair. His forehead was entirely bald, but round the back and at the sides of his fine head clustered an ample circlet of snow-white locks, which, skilfully arranged, gave him an aspect at once grand and venerable. He had the art of so disposing his pontifical garments as to lose none of his personal advantages. Having as fine a leg as any man in Italy, of which he was very vain, and which was always (to borrow an untranslaetable French phrase) *parfaitement bien chaussé*—it was his custom to hold up his long robes, so as perfectly to display at least one of his handsome limbs. And though these puerile affections, so little worthy of a grave pontiff, together with his care of his flowing curls, laid him open to another very indifferent, yet significant lampoon—yet nothing could, in fact, be more imposing than to see him on high festivals, his head encircled with the triple crown, robed in vestments of spotless white, set off by contrast with the Roman purple, soaring as it were above the crowd of ecclesiastics of all ranks, and seeming thus to proclaim and assert his domination over the

meeting the eye at every corner of Rome, were viewed in irritating contrast with the enormous price of bread—there was placed in the hand of Pasquin, the most diminutive of rolls, labelled "*Munificentiâ Pii Sixti.*"

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Universal Church. However humiliating and unworthy of rational beings" (adds the writer, in a spirit which even those more friendly to religion than himself can echo,) "this homage to a fellow-mortal must appear—yet persons least susceptible of similar impressions could not resist the effect of the splendour and solemnity surrounding the throne of St. Peter, while occupied by the magnificent-looking Pius VI."

Furnished by nature with these requisites, (admirably calculated, it must be confessed, to dazzle and subdue), it was in vain that his ablest counsellors, and few but candid and attached friends, endeavoured to dissuade him from prostituting them, in the vain hope of diverting from his headlong course of innovation the no less obstinate and self-willed Joseph II. They felt the dignity of the Church, as well as its waning influence, compromised by a degrading complaisance, which formed so humiliating a contrast with the submission exacted in former times from Emperors by the Pope. And while honest regard for that Church's interests called forth the regrets of even the most obedient and least penetrating members of the Sacred College, (though seven of them, separately consulted, were found to sanction the measure,) the astute and worldly-minded Cardinal Bernis was in despair* at the thoughts of seeing a man whom he really liked and cared for, rushing on the Scylla of the rocky inflexibility of Joseph on the one hand, or the Charybdis of undisguised ridicule and contumely from his sceptical and sneering prime minister on the other.

Had even the disposition of either been more pliable, or their unalterable determination less openly avowed, an ill-judged previous step on the part of the pontiff (however insignificant perhaps in itself, in the eyes of a man like Joseph) had nevertheless mingled somewhat of

* He concluded his last note of pathetic friendly dissuasion in the words of the Psalmist, "Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem."

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personal pique in the elements of his resistance. With a degree of infatuation difficult to conceive, at a period when in Maria-Theresa Rome had lost almost her last steady friend—the Pope denied to that most Catholic of sovereigns the funeral service accorded in his chapel to all reigning monarchs; as if a princess, who had for twenty years ruled alone, and for more than that period swayed the destinies of Europe, was to be reduced, by a papal slight, to the level of the nameless queens of tributary kings! The correspondence which passed on the subject was not calculated to soften the affront. The papal legate at Vienna having remonstrated, Pius, in a moment of ill-humour, replied: "It matters little to me whether the Emperor takes amiss this act of mine, or despises it." Joseph, for once, preferred the former alternative, and added with his own hand to the next dispatch for Rome laid before him for signature, "It matters not at all to me whether the Bishop of Rome be well or ill-bred;" thus flattering himself he had avenged his mother's ashes. Henceforward, although more suitable obsequies would no doubt have failed to arrest his reforms, they were pursued with less of outward deference; and a lurking *spite* mingled in all the attacks with which he plied the Holy See.

Here it is scarcely possible to avoid quoting (for a very different and more sacred purpose than that of lauding or depreciating a fallible mortal) the singular coincidence of the undesigned testimony of a French sceptical historian to a state of things scripturally descriptive of the later condition of the modern Babylon:

"The Pope appeared," he says, "at this epoch (1781) an object of compassion. *Almost all the sovereigns of Europe seemed to have come to an agreement to torment and molest him.*" And while this was the case with all the monarchies hitherto devoted to the papacy, France, strange to say—the one destined ere long to renounce not only that of

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Rome, but all spiritual authority, and to drag into captivity the very pontiff himself—was at this period, through the lingering influence of Cardinal de Bernis, his apparently sole ally. But we must hasten from this irresistible digression, to the memorable journey to Vienna.

A decree, only equalled in sweeping comprehensiveness by that of the Inquisition, which condemned by anticipation all the works Voltaire might *hereafter write*, was issued by the Emperor, obliging the bishops in his dominions to take an oath to acquiesce in all edicts already issued, or *hereafter to be issued* by him. This, (fruitlessly remonstrated against by letter) and the decree immediately following, throwing open the gates of all convents not dedicated to educational purposes, stimulated the Pope to take a step equally unexpected and undesired at Vienna as at Rome. Having conceived the hope of converting and enlightening the Emperor, it was in vain (as has been said) that he was dissuaded from the measure, by all who dared to lay before him its flagrant impropriety and impolicy.

Joseph, who had been advised against the reception of the visit, lest it should revive the fanaticism against which he was waging war, despised the danger, as he had done many others, and writing an *affectionate* (though perfectly intelligible) reply to this unheard-of proposal, seems to have felt a sort of bear-like satisfaction in stifling with honours and caresses the man whose humiliation he enjoyed, and whose every view in making the journey he was resolved to disappoint. What share the prostrations of former Cæsars at the feet of former Popes may have had in the pleasure derived by their descendants from the reverse of the medal, may be left to the reader's imagination.*

We pass over for want of space and time, the pompous

* "Pius the Sixth (says the author so often quoted) who was far from the inheritor of their tyranny, now expiated the insolence of his pre-

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reception (overshadowed here and there by symptoms of contagious contumacy) and almost divine honours, from the Catholic populations on his route, which attended Pius on his progress through Italy to Germany. But as Mordecai at the king's gate, amid the triumphs of Haman (we mean only, of course, as to its ominous import to one bound on a far different and really beneficent errand), must have been the first circumstance which greeted the pontiff on the Imperial territory; viz., the summons to Vienna, the angry rebuke, and heavy fine inflicted there on a prelate, who had presumed to prefer the Pope's commands to those of the Emperor; and the selection by the latter of three Hungarian nobles to *receive the head of the national Church*, from among the three tolerated, and thus equalised denominations, of Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist!

The reader will probably prefer the account given from ocular demonstration by the British Ambassador (in a letter to his sister) of the joint entry of the Pope and Emperor, to the more florid and *French* version of it of the memoir writer.

Sir Robert thus writes:—

"*Vienna, March 24th*, 1782.

"On Friday afternoon, I witnessed one of the most extraordinary sights which this age has afforded, and which could not fail to make a strong impression on the mind of every man who has the history of former times fresh in his memory.* I saw the Pope and the Emperor seated in the same chariot, and driving slowly to the imperial palace, through an immense crowd of quiet and

decessors; while Joseph the Second, under the exterior of urbanity, avenged the insult once offered to his own."

* This was so especially the case with the writer, and so universal was his acquaintance with history, that in an intellectual game (which he either invented or brought into fashion) it was found impossible to baffle him, by selecting the least known or most recondite historical events.

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respectable citizens, happy in expressing their veneration for the head of their Church, without any mixture of blind superstition, and their warm attachment to their beneficent sovereign, untainted with a grain of servile fear. Such a meeting would, a few centuries ago, have been the signal for a crusade, or some religious massacre. Even an hundred years ago, it would have foreboded some dangerous contestation; whereas I really hope that at present, it will be productive of two great benefits; the extension of universal benevolence and toleration; and the confirmation of the dearest rights of the subjects of this monarchy. The Emperor had gone four posts to meet the Pope upon the high road. When the two carriages came abreast, each of the sovereigns stepped out, and after the most cordial welcome, the Emperor handed the Holy Father into his own chariot, and returned to Vienna.*

"The Pope is a comely, venerable, and healthy-looking man of sixty years. His manners are affable and becoming. He receives the gentlemen with little ceremony, and speaks French to those who are not masters of Italian. The chapel of the palace was full of ladies, when Te Deum was sung on his arrival; but he sat in a close pew, and spoke to none of them. The papal etiquette will not permit him to see ladies in the Imperial palace, where he is lodged; but he will appoint a day of female presentation in the library, or at the palace in the suburbs, called the Belvedere. I shall pay my respects to him somehow, though not as the *British Minister*. We believe he will stay here about three weeks, and that all his eloquence will certainly not shake any of the Emperor's humane resolutions for the good of his people; but he will have every possible reason to be

* So studious was Joseph of external courtesy and the deference due to the character of the pontiff, that (says the memoir writer) he seated him on his *right* hand.

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satisfied with the respect paid to him, and with the cordial hospitality of the Emperor. He has no Cardinals in his suite, but four or five mean-looking bishops and ecclesiastics. He said mass this morning very privately in the Capuchin convent, but will officiate pontifically on Easter Sunday, and afterwards give his *papal benediction* to the people, from a balcony in the largest square in the city."

Those who have witnessed the striking and solemn effect which the latter ceremony is capable of producing (and not altogether, as the memoir writer observes, on Catholics *alone*) at Rome, where long repetition has rendered it familiar—will easily give credit to the sensation described by him which it excited for the first time in Vienna. The devotion, indeed, of the Catholic public of Austria was such as to indemnify its object for other secret disappointments. "The eagerness of the common people to receive his benediction amounted (says our author) to frenzy. The course of the Danube was fairly choked by the crowd of boats which bore the floods of pious pilgrims, and the great market-place (the scene of the ceremonial above alluded to) was often found filled with shoes and hats lost in the scuffle by the assembled multitudes; who, by twenty and thirty thousand* at a time, passed into the streets leading to the Imperial palace, at the balcony of which, repeatedly during the day, its illustrious guest was obliged to show himself, and distribute blessings to successive shoals of devotees. Nor was the homage confined to his person alone. The sacred slipper became, to the superstitious Viennese, an object of almost equal devotion. It was placed on a cushion in the audience-chamber, and there kissed by all the clergy, and hosts of other visitors, (some not excepted who from any but

* Fifty thousand are said to have been present in the great square on occasion of the Easter benediction.

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religious motives went to bear their part in a scene, which to their eyes exhibited the lowest depth of human degradation): and it was afterwards, as a special favour, allowed to be borne as a relic into several of the most distinguished mansions in Vienna."

Sir Robert thus resumes his letter, with the account of his private audience:—

March 26th.

"I have just now paid my respects to the Pope, in his cabinet, in company with the Hanoverian and Dutch ministers. He received us standing, having no one in the room with him but his Nuncio. He asked me if I spoke Italian; and upon my saying that I understood it perfectly, but did not dare to speak it, he said obligingly—'I must, then, produce my French, indifferent as it is.' But he spoke it well, and said in a quarter of an hour as many polite and flattering things of Britain, and the learned men of that country, as could be expressed in the time. He is comely, affable, and easy, as any sovereign can be. You know I could not make this visit as British Minister, but it was very well taken from the Chevalier Keith, and I had every reason to be satisfied with my reception, as well as my two companions. We made our lowest and most respectful bows on entering and retiring; but no kissings or genuflexions of any sort.

"The Pope was dressed entirely in white thin cloth, a long dress, a white *calotte*, white cotton gloves, and red slippers, embroidered with gold. This is the dress of his private apartments; when he appears out of them, he has a red velvet mantle, which covers his shoulders and breast, over the white gown, and an embroidered stole of red and gold, which hangs down from each side, almost to the ground. This dress is becoming. If I tire you with this *papal* journal, blame yourself for *insisting* on every particular."

R. M. K.

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It would have been well for the comfort as well as dignity of the poor Pope-errant, had every nominal son of the Catholic church testified towards him the manly courtesy of the Protestant envoy! But (as the latter had sagely predicted) the conferences held under the Imperial roof had proved as little satisfactory as the Emperor's conveniently assumed ignorance of all theological matters, and his reference of them to his chancellor—the yet more *philosophic* and inflexible Kaunitz—could possibly render them.

What that result would prove, was sufficiently indicated by the frozen bearing, and yet more freezing silence of the redoubtable minister. But the humiliation of Pius would not have been complete, had he not (in the vain hope of thus propitiating him, or moved, perhaps, by his own real love of the fine arts), after vainly awaiting a visit from the minister,* proposed one to him at his palace. His reception there was quite in keeping with Kaunitz's haughty, overbearing character, and with the whole of the singular *mélange* of honours and contumelies by which the papal crusade had been distinguished. All the family of the owner, in their richest attire, and servants innumerable, in state liveries, were in attendance on the threshold. But when the master of the house made his appearance, which was not for some time, it was in ordinary morning dress; and (with a familiarity, *certes,* unwonted towards the head of Christendom!) instead of humbly kissing the proffered hand, it was, with feigned cordiality, well shaken by the *soi-disant* courteous host! Never, too, was private *amateur* more unceremoniously *Ciceroned* over the valuable collections contained in the mansion, than this papal patron of the fine arts; who (says the

* Lest this should be incredible, it must be remembered that the Prince *never* waited on the Emperor, but that monarch always came to him.

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writer before quoted, and he is hardly to be believed were the anecdote less characteristic of Kaunitz) was turned here, and pushed there, in well simulated anxiety to afford him the best lights for every picture, by the first profane hand which had presumed thus to approach his sacred person. Here, to dissemble astonishment and disgust must have been a still harder penance than to affect contentment with the personal urbanity of the Emperor; nay, than to be reduced to bear testimony (as Pius did in a consistorial oration, the translation of which has been preserved among Sir R. M. Keith's papers) to the *exemplary devotion* of this refractory son of the Church.

The crowning act of a conduct discreditable on the part of Joseph and his minister, both as Catholics and men, towards a really pious and venerable (if facile and too confident) guest, took place on his quitting the Austrian capital. The Emperor, who had met him on his approach to Vienna with filial deference, and an emotion not unaccompanied (it is said by an eye-witness) with mutual tears, took leave of him with similar or enhanced demonstrations; and the soothing promise (no difficult one for so ubiquitous a monarch) of a return of the visit at Rome.

The separation took place at the church of the Monastery of Maria Brunn, a league from Vienna; when, after joining in mutual devotions, the Emperor and Holy Father tenderly embraced each other, amid the mingled shouts and sobs of the surrounding multitude.

The monks, at the suggestion of both monarchs, resolved to immortalise these touching circumstances, by a tablet (actually placed in their church some months afterwards) recording the above affecting particulars in a Latin and German inscription.

It does not add, that on the very evening after the interview had taken place, the Imperial Commissioners

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came to relieve the good monks from all future care in the administration of their revenues, by confiscating them at the command of the Crown. Could there be a more characteristic conclusion to the "singular pilgrimage," (as Sir Robert calls it) which it was his privilege to witness? *

His homeward journey partook of the mingled character of all else,—unlimited honours in wholly Catholic Bavaria,—and semi-Protestant courtesies from heretical Augsburg, for which the Lutheran magistrates were accused of idolatry, and rebuked by their constituents. Imperial leanings in the Bishop of Verona counterbalanced entire devotion on the part of the faithful at Padua and Vicenza; while even at Venice, where the whole magnificence of the senate and the enthusiasm of the people seemed called forth to lend splendour to his reception, some secret jealousy on the part of the nobles, of his too great apparent intimacy with their ermined slave, the Doge, gave rise to the Pope's abrupt departure, before the brilliant ceremony (postponed in his honour) of the marriage with the Adriatic.

The closing mortification of an idle journey (nobly redeemed by the true Christian magnanimity of the same Pius when an involuntary exile,) is thus recorded by Sir Robert:—

June 30th.

"We learn nothing more of the Pope, than that he has got quietly back to Rome, and not yet taken up the thunders of the Vatican. He was very coldly received in his own city of Cesina, where he had purposed staying three days; but the people called so loudly for bread instead of benedictions, that he left them on the second."

* By a singular coincidence, the noble convent of Mölk, where the Pope passed the first night on leaving Vienna, was the earliest asylum opened to him, by the nephew of Joseph, on the French taking possession of Rome.

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A curious and authentic corroboration of the above secret history relating to the papal visit to Venice, occurs in a letter from one of the most amiable of Sir R. M. K.'s Vienna lads, (whom he calls his sweet St. Asaph,) interesting in itself, as well as from the good feeling displayed in it.

LORD ST. ASAPH* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Venice, June 4th, 1782.

DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have this moment received the account of Rodney's victory; and as I know no one more warm in the cause of his country, I cannot defer sending you my most hearty congratulations. Having so often seen you stemming the torrent of bad news alone, opposed to the whole *corps diplomatique*, I regret extremely that I was not present when you announced this glorious event at Prince Kaunitz's.† I flatter myself, you know with how much of satisfaction I could pledge you in a bumper of your excellent champagne to the future success of Old England!

* Son to the Earl of Ashburnham.

† The reader, who has observed how anxiously Sir R. M. Keith has *thirsted* for authentic good news, to counteract the calumnies and opprobrium of which his one eproud country was then the subject throughout Europe, can hardly fail to echo the sentiments of the amiable writer. How "high" the tidings of such a signal triumph would enable the patriotic envoy to "hold his head" on this occasion, may be inferred from an anecdote related by a maturer observer than the youthful lord, who, a year or two later, visited Vienna. "Dining," says this gentleman, "at Prince Kaunitz's, the Spanish Ambassador, who had newly arrived in the country, seemed inclined to doubt some fact asserted by Sir Robert Keith. Upon which the Prince (the last man to utter an undeserved or even merited compliment) said, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, vous êtes étranger dans ce pays, c'est pourquoi il faut que je vous apprenne, qu'ici à Vienne, *lorsque Keith affirme, personne ne doute.*" A strong (and surely extorted) homage to truth this, on the part of a man, supposed to act on the opposite maxim, that "language was given to men to conceal their thoughts."

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The joy which I feel on this occasion, and your having expressed a desire to receive some intelligence of the Pope, are my excuse for troubling you so soon again with a letter.

On my arrival here, I was informed from unquestionable authority, that Mons. Foscarini,* in his letter to the senate, had said that the Pope told him that he left Vienna much mortified (sconsolato), not having gained one point.

His Holiness's visit has occasioned no little animosity and disorder both before and after it. It was preceded by several warm debates concerning the manner of receiving him. The Doge strongly urged that the greatest magnificence should be displayed, no expense spared; and quoted from their annals the entertainments given by the Republic to Henry III. and other similar instances. This being the Doge's opinion, was sufficient reason for its being opposed. The Doge, contrary to the opinion of the senate, deferred the ceremonies usually performed on the day of the Ascension, in hopes that the Pope would assist at them; in which he was disappointed, as his Holiness left Venice the day before.

Soon after his departure, an Inquisitor of State was deputed to the Doge, to inform him that he had given great offence to the senate, in having frequently *conversed with the Pope in a low voice;* that in so doing he had violated the law, which expressly forbids the Doge's having any private conversation with sovereigns; that in consequence of this he was ordered to reprimand him, and to admonish him not to be guilty, *at his peril,* of the same offence on any future occasion. A secretary attended to take this speech down in writing! The senate is at present debating regarding the sending a

* The Doge of Venice.

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minister to Petersburgh. I leave this place to-morrow; it would be unjust in me to omit saying that I have nowhere experienced greater civilities.

I am, with truth, dear Sir, your much obliged and sincere friend,

ST. ASAPH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

MY DEAR ANDREW, *Vienna, May 20th*, 1782.

If there were but three saints in the island of Great Britain of as exemplary patience as mine, they would draw down the choicest blessings of Heaven upon the whole nation! But, alas! I begin to find that this passive virtue is not only a fruitless, but a most tiresome one; and if you do not, in the course of a week, show me that my sanctity has had its recompense, I shall be tempted to desert to the other side, and try what is to be gained by *playing the devil.* I acquit you, my dear boy, and every living Drummond, of all shadow of blame in this bitter business; but still, let me remark to you in all meekness, that I have not a line from your pen since the middle of last November.

There are three mails due; will they produce anything? No news in this part of the world, but many kind and cordial wishes for the prosperity of Old England. I never understood my countrymen less than at this moment. One half of them seem to be laying trains of gunpowder, and preparing their matches to play off the fireworks; and the other half, instead of counteracting them, and making all the honest people in the kingdom aware of their designs, are catching at half-measures, and living upon the chapter of accidents. These things ought not to be so—hasten, my dear Andrew, to tell me that they are so no longer. You are a wicked set in London, and I am glad they have taken to hanging of you. But why did they not hang our cousin, George

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Gordon?* We hear he became a capital performer on the violin when you had him in the Tower; and many people of high fashion in the Holy Roman Empire are persuaded that a true John Bull never learns music so well as with a rope round his neck. No wonder they look upon us as strange animals! Within these four years we have been frantic, and fanatic, and melancholy, and frolicsome, as the wind changed; but our most steady pursuit has been that of sending poor Old England to perdition. How the devil should these plodding Germans understand us, when we do not understand ourselves? I have wished ten thousand times to be in Britain; yet I sometimes think that Providence acted kindly by me, in keeping me at a distance from such a scene of profligacy and confusion.

You know, my dear Andrew, that I have no aversion to a *frolic*, but really one would think that times like the present would throw a cast of sedateness and moderation into the bulk of the nation. But nothing is less true; and you are, indeed, a most incorrigible people! Does Vestris dance so enchantingly? Will he honour us with his presence another year? In that case, a fig for Washington and Franklin! all will go delightfully! And yet this crisis demands hard blows more than any preceding one. Rodney! Rodney! what the devil are you doing with one of the finest and most numerous fleets that ever a British Admiral commanded? *All you can.* That I dare say; but will no lucky opportunity offer of having a tight bout with Monsieur de Grasse, who has done us more mischief than many better seamen, his predecessors. Alas! I fatigue my lungs, with constant ejaculations to Heaven, for some *one* prosperous event, and all in vain, for many a long year! I must have done with this subject, it is

* Lord George Gordon.

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too irksome. Let me hear, at least, that you are well and happy; and that you continue to take a warm interest in the old *Highlander of Austria*. He is *for life* most cordially your friend and servant,

R. M. KEITH.

Our later naval triumphs and recognised maritime supremacy enable us very inadequately to appreciate the *delirious* joy in England, and eager participation in many states of the Continent, in the *then* unique victory of Admiral Rodney, or the delight it was calculated to afford the representative of hitherto humbled Britain, abroad. The letter, still extant (though too exclusively nautical in its *technical* details, and too voluminous for insertion here) considerately dispatched by Sir Charles Douglas, Rodney's Flag Captain, *the very morning after the battle*, to Sir Robert Murray Keith, bears, in its tattered, yet carefully stitched condition, the evidence of the many hands (many of them royal ones) through which it has passed. It was borrowed for special perusal by the Kings of Saxony and Poland, and two acknowledgments of its contents from *minor* German princes remain to attest their opinion of its importance.

The first is from the Queen's brother, Prince George of Mecklenburgh:—

"MONSIEUR,

"Permettez d'oser vous offrire mes sincères félicitations à l'occasion de la victoire éclatante emporteé par le Chevalier Rodney; souhaitant, du fond de mon âme, que cette époque glorieuse pour les armes Britanniques, dure assez longtemps pour accélérer une paix, également glorieuse pour la nation. J'ose en vous priant, Monsieur, de vous charger de l'incluse pour le Roi, vous réiterer les assurances de l'estime, et de la considération parfaite avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

"GEORGE DUC DE MECKLENBURG."

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The other is such a contrast in its light and somewhat irreverent tone, that it may be given as a specimen of a hunting *bon-vivant* German prince's epistolary style. The penmanship (in huge text) would disgrace a schoolboy:—

"J'ai bien des obligations à mon cher chévalier, de la peine que vous vous êtes donné pour me participer les exploits de vos *braves mariniers!* Nous venons de profiter du beau temps pour la chasse aux becasses, et le reste de la semaine nous donnerons la chasse au diable.* Je ne vous dirai pas que je veux que ce monsieur-là m'emporte si je ne vous estime pas; parceque le capucin m'a defendu à langage: mais j'ose bien jurer, par Calvin et Luther, que je suis, et serai toute ma vie, mon cher chévalier, votre très humble et réconnaissant,

"JOSEPH FREDERIC DUC DE SAXE."

MR. BOYD† TO SIR ROBERT KEITH.

London, May 24th, 1782.

I SHOULD have much wished, dear Sir Robert, to have given you the account of our late glorious achievements by the first post, but I was at Danson, and only returned to town yesterday. It would be absurd in me to repeat what your letters must already have informed you of; but in addition to the joy which so gallant and glorious an event must inspire every Englishman with, I feel many private reasons for rejoicing. Among the first is the satisfaction you must have in promulgating such an important and decisive victory; next comes the share I have in everything that can contribute to

* Alluding to some festival of the Romish Church, in a spirit of levity and irreligion, then too prevalent within its pale.

† This gentleman (afterwards Sir John Boyd) affectionately and frequently mentioned (as the *Baron*) in the correspondence, passed some years at Vienna.

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the happiness of as worthy a man as ever breathed—our friend George Rodney. I feel, likewise, a considerable pleasure in that great commander's having given such a blow to our arch-enemy, as must silence every voice that was ready to cry out against him. I have fought many battles for him at home; and you cannot doubt that it gives me inexpressible satisfaction to see every officer in our fleet write in the fullest panegyric on their brave commander. The debate (which I inclose, lest you should not have it in your paper) most incontestably proves the universal harmony, and unanimous opinion of every man upon the business of that day. I am sure you will be glad to hear of the honours conferred on the principal actors. Rodney is created an English peer, Hood and Drake Irish peers, and Douglas and Affleck made baronets. All this is to be done *immediately*.

The French can now gloss over nothing. We have a correct list of their force as well as our own, and on casting up the number of guns, they exceeded us by seventy-two. On the other hand, they are entitled to praise for the gallantry of their conduct. The captain of one of their seventy-fours that was taken, when he had not a mast standing, and his ship lay a mere ungovernable hulk in the water, took the colours, tied them himself to a stick, and fixed them on his quarter-deck; nor did he strike till he had not a gun to fire.

Monsieur de Grasse had expended all his ammunition when he struck. He had above 430 men killed in the action, besides his wounded; near double our loss of killed in our whole fleet. Lord Cranston relates that never was there so shocking a sight as the *Ville de Paris* exhibited when he went on board her; every deck covered with dead bodies, and a deluge of blood. It is miraculous that our loss was so small, considering the length, the severity, and universality of the engagement;

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at one time every ship in both fleets was engaged. I am so full of public feelings, that I cannot say a word on private affairs, but must end as I began, by expressing the peculiar pleasure I experience in reflecting on the comfort you will feel in receiving this good news; and how doubly welcome it must be to you, not only from its real glory and importance to your country, but from having had such a hard task in struggling against all the previous painful tidings we had been receiving day after day, for so many months before.

Among other particulars which have transpired since the action, I cannot help giving you a further account from Lord Cranston. When he went on board the *Ville de Paris* to take possession of her, he delivered a polite message from Sir G. Rodney to Monsieur de Grasse, desiring he would continue the command of his own ship while she remained with the fleet; which he declined, from being exhausted with fatigue and unable to attend to it. He begged to retire to his cabin to take some rest, but before he did it, or before he could ever enjoy any peace, he wished to know the opinions of the British officers as to his conduct. Lord Cranston made him easy by assuring him they admired his bravery, and did justice to his efforts; and if they found any blame, it was for his not having struck sooner. This he accounted for by saying he was determined not to strike his flag on any account till the day closed, for fear of the effect it might have on the rest of his fleet; but he said his officers had all represented to him that his ship was totally incapable of making any further resistance some hours before, and every shot they fired latterly was fetched out of the hold.

Monsieur de Grasse retired, and Lord Cranston set about examining and clearing the ship, when he found her on fire in five different places. The men who were not killed or wounded were mostly drunk, and he could

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not get the smallest attention paid to his orders. He was, therefore, obliged to disturb Monsieur de Grasse, who jumped up, put on his gown and slippers, drew his sword, and came upon deck; when he found the confusion so great that he was compelled to make pretty free and severe use of his weapon before he could obtain any attention to his commands. This brought them to reason; they soon got the fires under, De Grasse returned to his cabin, and Lord C. got the ship into the best order he could. He soon found a great number of cooks set to work in preparing an elegant repast, which was served up to the officers.

Lord Cranston expected an invitation, but not receiving it, or the slightest civility from any one French officer, he went down to them, expressed his resentment, and said that he had had as much fatigue and as little refreshment as themselves, but that he would see every one of his officers and crew refreshed before a single Frenchman ate a morsel, though he himself would touch nothing before them. This occasioned some surprise, but was acquiesced in; and when a second supper was prepared, they thought proper to send a polite invitation and apology to Lord Cranston for an accidental omission before, which proceeded from no design or disrespect. He accepted both, but says that no scene of noise, riot, and drunkenness ever equalled what followed that entertainment; not a Frenchman who did not appear to have gained a complete victory instead of having suffered a defeat. This does not tell much to the credit of their humanity,* considering the number of their friends that were lying dead and wounded in the ship. This is a long story, but as it is characteristic and *genuine*, I could not help giving it to you. The

* It is very pleasing to have to contrast so many and recent instances of the interchange of the most humane and brotherly offices between the naval men of the once hostile nations.

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season is so wet, cold, and unhealthy, that scarce a family in this part of the world is free from sickness. In my life I never remember so general an influenza.

H. B.

MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 3rd, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

Though I wrote to you not long ago, and have now less time for writing than, I believe, any man in his Majesty's dominions, I can't help troubling you with a line or two, which you'll find is indeed, in the literal sense, troubling you, not being for the mere pleasure of conversation. But as I shall, in my present arduous and responsible situation,* have occasion for all the helps imaginable, so there is no source, I am sure, I may more confidently draw from than yours; and as there is no military system more or better studied than that where you live, I shall be infinitely obliged to you for any such lights on some parts of it as I fancy I can by any means apply, to remedy a multitude of defects subsisting in ours. Among many wants which strike me, and which I have long had the inclination, without the power of supplying, are those of a proper seminary for officers, and particularly for breeding up officers' children; for which, as you know, our Woolwich academy is but a miserable, confined institution.

Another is for soldiers' children, of which there is indeed one in Ireland, which is grown something that promises to be useful; but my ideas are much more extensive, and I don't despair of being able, one time or other, to bring it about on an enlarged plan. I have heard that the institutions for both these purposes have been lately enlarged and improved by the Emperor;

* Marshal Conway was at this period Commander-in-Chief.

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and I should be much obliged to you for any information you can be so good as to procure me, which you judge could be of use.

I should also be glad to know the particulars of the institution of the lately-established military order; and to know the details and the effects of the limitation of the soldier's time of service, which I know obtains as well in the Imperial as in the Prussian service.

I conclude you have, by this time, taken leave of your Holy guest. I have for some time prodigiously envied you the enjoyment of one of the most extraordinary scenes that I suppose was ever exhibited on this earthly theatre; and which I hear has been conducted by his Imperial Majesty with a good sense and propriety that adds much to my great admiration for him.

You will by this time have heard of our great naval victory in the West Indies, which we flatter ourselves may (under Providence) give an important turn to our affairs. Our last Indian news has also for some time worn a good colour; and we flatter ourselves, though perhaps threatened and out-numbered in these European quarters, we need *not tremble*.

A very recent event, is what may in all propriety be called the *pacification* of Ireland; the full flow of their affections, which appearances now promise, and their having so unanimously shown it by the noble grant of 20,000 seamen—all these things have raised our spirits, and our stocks considerably; and though where they have depended on our yielding and reconciling spirits, I doubt if you will approve—yet they add immediate strength, and have produced a present actual unanimity at home, to be shortly followed (though on the same yielding principle) by an equal reconciliation with America. All this is the completion of my system, which you and I have sometimes debated about, as well as our friend Yorke. I shall not *triumph*, till

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the effects are more clear and complete; yet I own my confidence is great. Adieu, my dear Sir. I beg you not to let me be forgot by your friends, whom I shall always be happy to call mine. Accept Lady Aylesbury's compliments, and believe me,

Your most faithful and affectionate,

H. S. C.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO PHILIP YORKE, ESQ.

Vienna, August 17th, 1782.

MY DEAR YORKE,

I most sincerely congratulate you upon your marriage with as amiable and honest a young woman as the King's dominions contain.* I have followed her steps (though often at a distance) from the cradle upwards, and with the warmth of almost parental affection.† My heart was set upon seeing her happily settled as the wife of a man of honour and truth. Heaven has fulfilled that wish in its utmost extent!

My felicitations to her are founded, not upon your present affluent circumstances or future prospects, but upon the power she now possesses of following the natural bent of her disposition and principles, by making the house of her husband and friend the seat of domestic happiness and contentment, through a long series of years. She will tell you, my dear Yorke, that she saw in her own father and in mine, two men, drawing towards fourscore, who, at that age, blessed the hour that united them to women of merit and steady principle

* Lady Elizabeth Lindsay, daughter to the Earl of Balcarres, and cousin to the writer.

† In a letter, written nearly ten years previously, to his sister, he thus expresses himself: "Why do you not mention my sweet little ward, Lady Elizabeth? Seriously, I think little Bessy a jewel of too much value not to be set hereafter in the purest gold, and placed to the best advantage."

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May you follow their example, my dear Philip! I have not the smallest doubt of your doing so, though I shall not be alive to applaud you.

I recommend all the Lindsays to you; they are excellent people, and the boys will fight their way through life with spirit and success.* Lord Balcarres is a high-minded, brave, and generous lad as any in Britain, and I feel proud when I recollect that he was my *pupil*. I respect your present enjoyments too much to interrupt them by touching upon disagreeable politics. A thousand kind things to all Yorkes and Lindsays; my *love* to Lady Eliza. You are well assured that no man is more deeply interested in your happiness than your faithful friend,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, September 14th, 1782.

I NEVER was more affected by any melancholy event which did not immediately regard my nearest and dearest of friends, than by the sad news of the unaccountable shipwreck of Admiral Kempenfeldt and his gallant crew, almost within an English harbour.† Surely

* Every part of this fond prediction was punctually fulfilled. Domestic felicity attended the pair addressed, through a life protracted, on the Earl's part, beyond its usual span; and still happily prolonged in that of his venerable partner, who witnessed the prosperity and distinction of her whole band of brothers.

† This appalling event, occasioned by contempt of an unimagined danger, in suffering the vessel during a slight repair to be incautiously heeled, has been revived in the public mind, by recent successful attempts to remove the hull, and recover a portion of the guns, &c. It forms a pleasing coincidence, that at the distance of sixty years, these efforts should have been presided over, as Port Admiral, by the late Sir Philip Henderson Durham, at the time of the catastrophe seventh lieutenant, and one of the few officers saved; to whom, as a valuable memorial of his early escape, and subsequent gallantry in his country's service, a recovered iron cannon was presented by the Board of Ordnance, and

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there is an adverse fate which persecutes poor Old England! it grieves me to the heart, my dear Andrew, to see so many proofs of that painful persuasion. At a moment when my ardent imagination was seeking for the name of Kempenfeldt either in the mouth of the Mediterranean or the Baltic, he is a corpse upon the British shore, and by some awkward mismanagement unworthy of our naval skill and experience. This is, indeed, afflicting. Our Bourbon enemies, within my view, do honour to Kempenfeldt and to themselves, by the sorrow they express at this accident. I am very impatient to learn all its melancholy particulars.

I confess to you, my dear Andrew, (but without a grain of peevishness,) that I have not, for years past, comprehended fully any one operation of the war; and I am still more in the dark with respect to your clandestine attempts to trump up a dirty peace. This I say to you in confidence, because I am determined never to hurt the servants of the State; though I have long given up the hopes of being able to render them such services as become my principles. All my trusty friends will believe me when I say, that the bribe of a dukedom would not lead my pen to dabble in dirty ink. Happily it is permitted to vent my honest feelings without restraint; and I have never been called upon to take the smallest share in the present obscure and inauspicious transactions!

Who is going to Gibraltar? When will that necessary exertion be undertaken?—since it is impossible, even in these dilatory times, that the succours can be withheld, till they are too late or altogether superfluous. We expect every hour to hear that the assault is already begun. When will the turbulent campaign

erected in front of the family mansion, at Largo, in Fife. The noblest monument to the unhappy sufferers is to be found in Cowper's never-to-be-forgotten ballad.

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in St. Stephen's Chapel begin? The questions to be agitated there are of greater moment than any which have presented themselves for a century. If Lord North, from patriotic considerations, shall determine to support this administration, for fear of a *worse*, then matters may prosper; but without Lord North and his friends, I see not the smallest chance of their standing. I have not the least idea of the manner in which the troops on both sides will be mustered. Pray, my dear Andrew, open my eyes upon this subject as soon as you can, and believe me, ever yours, most cordially,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, November 30th, 1782.

YOUR letter of the 7th was very welcome to me, my dear Andrew, and I gladly accept as an apology for your silence, your enjoyment in the country. What a charming party your father had, with Rigby, the Chancellor, Lord Weymouth, &c. How delighted I should have been to occupy a chair at his hospitable board, in those days of festivity! I should have received comfort from such a company, in this moment of anxious doubt, lest the honour and interests of Old England should be sacrificed to party rage and personal views. I never felt so uneasy as at present, my dear Andrew; for I not only am in the dark with respect to the real state of parties in your depraved nation; but can hardly see a peep of daylight into the intended measures of the administration under which I serve. Surely the brave Elliott* and Howe have so far reinstated the national affairs as to give full room for the most vigorous and *successful* exertions of our strength, if there is any

* General Elliott, created Lord Heathfield for his gallant conduct at Gibraltar.

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degree of the ancient spirit still existing among us! I cannot entertain so mean an opinion of the men in power, as to suppose them capable of letting down Old England from her present dignified situation; or that they can submit to receive the law from powers who are *ten times more exhausted* than herself! May the opening of parliament relieve me from all my anxiety. May the love of peace be accompanied with due regard to the rights and dearest interests of our country; and I venture to foretel that all will go well in the course of another twelvemonth.

I know nothing about your present negotiation at Paris: thank Heaven! I have not the *least hand* in it! and I am confident that no minister will think of employing my pen in any species of *dirty work*. May the hands of government be strengthened by the reunion of all the best men in the kingdom, to carry the first great question; and all the rest will follow of course. I shall be *upon thorns* till I see the issue of the first debates. Pray, my sweet Andrew, help me to understand them! The bulk of the nation in which I live received with rapture all the glorious tidings from Gibraltar. Three of our poets have already sung the exploits of Elliott in very good Latin and German verses. The whole Austrian nation is prepared to applaud those honours which the King and Parliament will doubtless bestow upon the heroic commanders. May they mark the gratitude of a *great* nation!

I was made very happy by a visit of my old comrade, General Boyd,* on his way from Gibraltar to England. He is as pleasant a fellow as any in the world, and really cheered my spirits, even in these abominable times. He has been received with great distinction

* Second in command at the glorious defence of Gibraltar, where the idea of the red-hot shot, which did such execution on the Spanish floating batteries, is said to have been his.

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here by the sovereign and all the best people, and, indeed, he well deserves it. I am sorry to think that, after visiting the Emperor's camp with me to-morrow, he must set out the next day for England, as he is to visit our old master, Prince Ferdinand, in Brunswick. By the way, how I envy him that happiness; but I am surely one of the wicked! (though my conscience does not tell me how), since there is neither rest nor comfort for me, at a time when treaties of peace are signing in every quarter. I am *literally* the *Mungo* of all the politicians in Europe! One wish only I have, and a very sincere one—that the peace, about which so many *cooks* are employed, may turn out safe and honourable! The honour or blame, be they what they may, belong in no degree whatever to me. I am ready, however, to applaud what is *right* and *well done*, be the peace-maker John, or Thomas, or Peter!

Yours, cordially,

R. M. K.

LORD APSLEY* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Apsley House, 11th April, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

It was my intention to have written to you from Paris, and not to have remained so long silent, had I not thought that by waiting till I came hither, I might render my letter more interesting, by communicating to you something of the events in our unhappy distracted country. It otherwise would have contained little more than my sincere thanks for your great kindness to me during my stay at Vienna; which, however agreeable it might have been for me to

* Afterwards the well-known Earl Bathurst. The letter is curious, as showing how early in his life the prudence and moderation so conspicuous in the veteran statesman, manifested themselves.

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express, would not have had anything very extraordinary to engage your attention. It is but the tribute which every Englishman finds it his duty to pay for his kind reception.

I should have kept my promise in writing to you the moment a ministry was formed, had I not conceived that Mr. Fox's letter would have arrived as soon as mine, if not sooner; and had I not been engaged that post-day (last Friday) in writing a refusal of an office which the new Administration did me the honour to offer me.

Lord Bathurst seemed most desirous of my accepting it; and I even went to Court to kiss hands on Friday; but some delay happening concerning the other members of the Board of Admiralty, I had time enough to prevail on my father to have his permission to write a refusal; not being willing so early and so blindly to embrace any party, but more particularly one made up of such discordant principles as that which composes the present Administration.

With respect to what previously happened, the newspaper accounts were pretty accurate. The King continues to be most averse to the men he has found himself under the necessity of employing, and has refused to make any peers; declaring that with respect to *permanent honours* they shall not be masters. They are at a great loss whom to appoint as successor to Lord Temple, who is determined to resign. Lord Derby has shown more sense than I thought he possessed, in declining that honour. It is said that Lord Mansfield was offered to be Speaker of the House of Lords, by the Duke of Rutland, merely as a compliment; and that his lordship has distressed the Administration much by accepting the offer. There is not a shilling in the Treasury, but it must be added that the monied men in the city have made vast offers, and of immediate advance of the sums required.

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If you now consider England as degraded, you would not change your opinion by coming over (which many of your friends wish and expect that you will), and examining the manners of the chief men among us. Such open prostitution, and prevention of seduction, by putting oneself up to sale, was perhaps scarcely ever known in any country! I have heard men declare, in public company, that if their friends had not places, they would not accept any themselves, nor support the Administration. People are the more importunate, knowing that things will be run very hard on the first division; so that for a permanent Administration, you must expect none for some time.

I suppose Mr. Fox must have informed you that the only change, with respect to the division of business between the two Secretaries of State, is America being added to his share, as being a *foreign power!* The discipline of the navy is much endangered, if not totally destroyed, by Lord Howe's mild conduct on the occasion of the mutiny. If you ask me how that affair has ended, much and nearly as it concerns us, I can only answer, as every one else in London does, "I know nothing about it;" all men confining their inquiries to what persons have resigned, or who have accepted places. I hope that you will now come over, to get over your old-fashioned ideas of loving England for England's sake: for men of such principles can by no means represent the nation. Before I finish this long and tedious letter, I am charged by Lord Bathurst with his sincere thanks to you for your kind letter to him; and to express how highly sensible he is of the attention which you were so good as to show to, dear Sir,

Your faithful and much-obliged humble servant,

APSLEY.

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LORD HEATHFIELD* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Gibraltar, May 8th, 1783.

DEAR GENERAL,

The letter you honoured me with of the 8th December, *vid* Leghorn, was transmitted by shipping, and only reached this place two days ago. I can't disguise my vanity upon receiving your approbation of what has passed here during the enemy's persevering attempt. You don't make these professions as a minister, but as a friend (perhaps too partial) and as a warrior not of yesterday. We have trodden the thorny path together, sometimes too near the precipice. My journey is near concluding; but you, dear friend, have before your eyes a brilliant career. The chace is pleasant indeed, *quand on est rompu au poil et à la plume*. How you must enjoy the Imperial Court where military and political science are in perfection!

I take the liberty to enclose an answer to Captain Riddell, with his commanding officer's and my entire approbation of his design for improvement: under General Keith's protection, he has a fine opportunity.

Now, my dear Sir, I must apply to you on the most delicate subject, and one in which nothing but your knowledge and address can be of service to me.

At Pisa, in Italy, Lieutenant Kochler of the Artillery, one of my most confidential aides-de-camp, was presented to his Imperial Majesty, who was pleased to converse with him a long while, and upon the whole, testified such approbation of my conduct as I dare not repeat; adding that he *should have much pleasure in seeing and conversing with me*. Such expressions from such a man,

* Better known, perhaps, as the General Elliott, whose memorable defence of Gibraltar is so modestly alluded to in a letter to his former comrade.

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and that man the present Emperor of Germany!—it is not easy to conceive my astonishment. I can only receive them with respectful silence.* If anything is proper to be said for me, to your friendship I must have recourse. I am certain you will not abandon an old comrade in his difficulties. Let me entreat you to do what is right. Should Lieutenant Kochler be fortunate enough to reach Vienna, let me beg your countenance of him. He will not abuse it, and I think him worthy of a soldier's notice.

Happy I am Prince Kaunitz sees me in a favourable light. I first knew him in Flanders, just as he began to take the lead in Europe. Forgive me talking of what alone concerns myself, and do favour me with some commands, that my obedience may prove the preference I give to your wishes.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
G. A. Elliott.

In 1783, when the courtesy and good offices of Sir R. M. Keith to his young countrymen had become pretty well known, the Duke of Montagu thus writes:—

Windsor Castle, Sept. 6th, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I am thoroughly aware how you are pestered with recommendations of young travellers, which is very natural, as their friends cannot do them more essential service than to recommend them to your favour and protection. I feel that so much, that I cannot resist adding to the number, by commending to you my

* These expressions of unaffected modesty, from a man with whose exploit all Europe at that time rung, enhance if possible its glory. It will have been seen that a friendship so honourable to Sir Robert Keith was *mutual*, from his frequent expressions regarding the brave governor *previous to the siege*.

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nephew Lord Stopford, who will have the honour of waiting on you with this. I think him a very amiable young man; I shall have the satisfaction of being sure he is so, if he has the good fortune to merit your approbation; and I have great pleasure in persuading myself that he will profit much by having the advantage of your conversation.

As I have his welfare very much at heart, it was my earnest wish that he might pass the winter, at least, under your eye at Vienna. But what confirmed this step to be preferable to any other, was his Majesty (who spontaneously had given him an ensigncy in the Guards) being most graciously pleased to say to his parents, Lord and Lady Courtown, "You cannot do better than send your son to Vienna, and get the Duke of Montagu to recommend him to his friend Sir Robert Keith."* I can venture to say that they, as well as myself, will feel greatly obliged to you for whatever good offices you may be pleased to honour him with, and I am with great truth and regard, and with most perfect esteem, dear Sir,

Your very faithful, &c.,

MONTAGU.

SIR JAMES HARRIS† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Frankfort, Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

After one of the pleasantest journeys possible, through the finest of countries, and with the finest

* On another occasion (indeed on many) the King similarly expressed himself. "Lord Morton (writes one of his friends) informed you of the audience he had of the King. His Majesty mentioned you in the most friendly and flattering manner imaginable; and finished by saying, 'Your lordship never could have been under the direction of so *able or excellent* a man as Sir Robert Keith.'"

† Afterwards Lord Malmsbury, the celebrated diplomatist.

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weather, we arrived here yesterday between ten and eleven at night. The first use I make of a pen since I left Vienna, is to thank you most sincerely and candidly for your more than kind reception. My visit there has in every point fully met my expectations, and in none more completely, my dear Sir, than by personifying, if I may use the term, my friendship and esteem for you. I recollect, with as tenacious a memory as Hamlet did the "Remember me" of his father's spirit, the last words you said to me in your closet; and be assured that I place you at the top of the list of those on whose regard and good will I set the highest value. My stay at Vienna operated on my mind like balm on a green wound. My soul wanted that calm which the society of the upright and candid can alone give; and it is now somewhat restored to that energy it was near losing. I rely on you to find an opportunity of expressing mine and my lady's respectful gratitude to the Emperor. To Prince Kaunitz you cannot say too much. He need not suspect my veracity, as I can have no interest in flattering him. To Madame de Pergen, Madame de Thun, and, if you please, Galitzen, the kindest compliments. Count Romanzow and I have already talked over the first of these ladies,* and I do not like him the less for his high esteem and admiration for her. I am most sincerely anxious for the recovery of Madame de Thun, and pray you to keep me informed of the state of her health.

You will not forget me to Count Philip; he treated me too kindly not to be entitled to a very large share of my gratitude for the many marks of attention I received at Vienna.

I shall bear in my mind all you wish me to do and

* Madame de Pergen and Madame de Thun, here mentioned, were the most distinguished ornaments of Vienna society, and the peculiar friends of Sir R. M. Keith.

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say when I arrive in England, which will probably be about the 18th.

I can have no politics worthy of your notice. The military preparations of France are still going on with as much activity as her credit and pecuniary resources will admit of. But these are at their lowest ebb, and a general alarm of a national bankruptcy is gone abroad. The fate of Dantzick seems decided, unless some tutelary angel interposes in their behalf.

Adieu, my ever dear Sir Robert. Let us be good correspondents throughout life, whether for the sake of the service, or for that of maintaining, I trust I may say, a *mutual* regard.

Ever yours most affectionately,

JAMES HARRIS.

Lady Harris and my sister partake of every feeling expressed in this letter.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, August 14th, 1784.

THOUGH I am living in a constant whirlwind of dissipation, feasting, dancing, and courtly waggery, following from morning till morning, my amiable Prince Frederick, I will not delay a moment to thank you, my dear Andrew, for your welcome and kind letter of the 27th July. Now or never, my brave Drummonds must help to lift me out of the mire, where I am floundering over head and ears. My ruin has been drawing on from year to year, (though, Heaven knows, by no extravagance of my own,) but this *Princely* visit of a *month* has hastened it exceedingly. Be not afraid, however, my dear Andrew, that matters are worse than you know of. My Drummonds are my only consolation; for if I were to break up here to-morrow, my goods and chattels at Vienna would *more* than amply

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suffice to carry me clear out of this country. But to have an independent crust of bread in my old days, is the laudable wish of your old friend, and if, under the guidance of my Drummonds, that great object can be secured, I shall be the happiest of mortals.

You know I have not drawn any money from my agents in England since I got the 10th regiment; but I only mention *en passant*, as Harry knows *what I have*, and how it is to be disposed of. I shall never inquire more about the matter. Cut and carve upon me, as you please—and make of me *what you can!* Lord, Lord! when shall I see you all at Cadlands? These wicked continental politics grow more and more intricate, and they will, I fear, tie me by the pen for many months to come. If I can do *good at last*, all my trouble will be repaid ten-fold. In the mean time I can assure you (without presumption) that my superiors pay me handsomely in *praise*, if not in hard money. Alas! they have little hard money for themselves! I am rejoiced that matters go so swimmingly in parliament. The peace with Tippoo Saib (which I sent you to England about three weeks since) will strengthen the hands of government, and credit of the East India Company. The general esteem of the nations of Europe goes along with Mr. Pitt, and he truly deserves it.

My young Prince is one of the handsomest and most excellent young men I ever knew.* This is not flattery, but *plain honest truth*. I am proud of the honour of presenting him, and he is equally beloved and admired

* Prince Frederick, afterwards Duke of York. As a specimen of the expensive style in which this visit was performed, General Grosvenor, in writing to Sir R. M. Keith to take a house for his royal pupil, stipulated for stabling for fourteen horses, and lodging for six grooms. The biped appendages were in proportion; and the envoy's expenses may be imagined.

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here. In three days hence he will go to a country-house of the Emperor's, and afterwards accompany him to all the camps. I dare not stir from Vienna, at the present juncture, otherwise I should attend his Royal Highness every where. I had, besides the Prince and three officers of his *suite*, at least a score of John Bulls, who are genteel lads, and do me credit. But how they devour the remainder of my substance, you will easily conceive! The Pergens and Thuns remember you kindly. They have been the ornaments of my feasts and balls; and Elizabeth Thun danced most nimbly, and looked most lovely at my ball the night before last, though, alas! she cannot yet swallow anything solid. Tell this to Boyd, who I am sorry should, on this occasion, merit the epithet of the laziest fellow in Christendom. I must hasten to join my Prince. Adieu, my dear Andrew; Heaven bless you and yours!

Ever your true and warm friend,

R. M. K.

This mention of the Duke of York, whom, to prove that his Majesty's flattering expressions were not words of course, the King had sent to Sir Robert's care, to spend some time at Vienna, where no pains or expense was spared to make his residence agreeable to him, may lead to the insertion here (though, like the rest of these miscellaneous epistles, rather out of the order of dates) of one or more of the earlier effusions of a gratitude, which, to the honour of that warm-hearted young Prince, remained unimpaired during a lengthened correspondence of several years. It will be seen that he, too, reverted to his stay at Vienna with the fondest reminiscences, and long cherished for the members of Sir R. Keith's select *coterie*, as well as for himself, the most grateful and affectionate regard.

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Korlitz, near Brünn, August 31*st*, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

Permit me to repeat to you my most sincere thanks for the very great civilities and attention which I received from you during my stay at Vienna. Indeed I shall ever remember with pleasure the time which I passed there; and I am sure that it was wholly owing to your goodness. The camp here finishes to-morrow. The Emperor spoke publicly to-day at table, of the proposed alliance between the French and Dutch; and said that he had sent the Dutch word that he meant to send some ships down the Scheldt; and if they were in the least molested, he should consider it as a declaration of war. Yesterday a courier arrived from Paris, and I don't think that the Emperor was perfectly satisfied with the contents. As there are many things which I would wish to inform you of, or learn from you, which (like this) I am afraid to trust to the post, I should be exceedingly obliged to you, to send me some words and names for *people*, not down in our cyphers, by which we might communicate without danger. Pray give our very best compliments to the Pergens and Thuns; and I am sure it would be very ungrateful if I did not beg you to make my best respects to Madame Zichy.

I am most sincerely, ever, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate,

FREDERICK.

SIR GREY COOPER TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cavendish Square, March 17*th*, 1785.

DEAR SIR ROBERT KEITH,

I cannot sufficiently express to you the satisfaction which I received in reading your most pleasing

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and favourable report of the character, principles, and good conduct of my son. It still vibrates on my heart. I communicated the pleasure to an affectionate mother, to two sisters, and a brother, who have the blessing of sensibility. They have all rejoiced with me in reading your charming letter over and over again; and they are united in their gratitude to you for your kind attention to the beloved young man who has had the good fortune to have been placed under your care; to have attended to your instructions; to have merited your approbation, and to have obtained your friendship. It is with the utmost regret that I find myself obliged to recall him from so excellent a school, and from so advantageous a situation. He would take the liberty of showing you my last letter, which fixed the time for his return to his regiment, viz., the latter end of the month of June. If you will honour him with a letter to the Duke of York or Prince William, his reception at Hanover will repay him for his deviation from his road, and perhaps may procure him the distinction of being the bearer of any letters which their Royal Highnesses may have occasion to convey to London. Perhaps for some late intelligence, the route by Berlin may not be quite *so proper;* perhaps while I am writing, "Armorum sonitum toto Germania cœlo audiit." I leave him to your direction: continue, dear Sir Robert, to be his guide, his mentor, his friend, and be assured that I am always, with the truest regard and esteem,

Your affectionate and much obliged humble servant,

GREY COOPER.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, May 21st, 1785.

MY DEAR ANDREW,

The same goodness of heart, and zeal of friendship which ever distinguished your character, are strongly

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manifested in your letter of the 25th of April, from Bath. May the effects of your two months' residence there prove to the highest degree salutary to the health of our sweet Lady Mary, who well deserves that the blessing of complete health should be added to those she enjoys, and knows how to value. I have heard of the very intricate affairs which your uncle and Mr. Harley have to settle with the Government, and happy shall I be to hear that they are terminated to the *entire* satisfaction of those two worthy men. I have my youngest sister now in London.* An old maiden, without any of the faults attached to that title. She has an excellent understanding, and a warm heart; I therefore recommend her to the intimate acquaintance of my Drummonds.

You have seen, by this time, that their high and blustering Mightinesses in Holland, have completely bent their necks to the French yoke, and are going to subscribe to the terms of pacification which France has dictated. This will restore tranquillity to *one* part of Europe. But I am at a loss to foretell how long it may last. There reigns a general ferment in most of the cabinets on the Continent, and a restless pursuit of great plans, which, sooner or later, must draw on a general combustion.

The worst of the matter (with regard to myself) is, that whilst there is even the distant appearance of a gathering storm my patriotic zeal will not allow me to think of quitting the *deck*, even when I have no share whatever in directing the *course* of the vessel. I believe, my dear Andrew, that I often push my concern and anxiety too far; but I have, in so many repeated instances, seen the political affairs of Old England, with respect to the *Continent*, left to the mercy of the winds

* The 'Mrs. Bethune Baliol of Sir W. Scott's "Chronicles of the Canongate."

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and waves, from the negligence or supineness of the pilots, that I am most heartily disposed to stand to my tackle *in all weathers,* in order to lend a helping hand to the present commanders, whenever they may think proper to give the ship more way. They have excellent principles and dispositions, that I will say for them, and I wish them success in every shape! I was glad to hear, by the last letters, that the session of parliament is likely to end so soon, and in so satisfactory a manner. Nobody has yet explained to me how the Irish affair will be settled; but I trust that it has been *maturely weighed* (as one of the most important in every point of view), and that the termination will prove equally advantageous to both nations.

Your young Pitt is indeed a wonderful instance of the power of early genius, and I cannot tell you how much I long to know him personally. One or two of the happy days you spent *together* at Cadlands* would have been to me a heartfelt enjoyment. Pray keep me in the kind remembrance of the *Gang,* and all my Vienna lads. They will be the comforts of my old age. There is a Mr. Scott, of Harden, just now gone from hence to England, who is a pleasant and valuable young man. If he comes in your way make much of him. He deserves it!

Adieu. Yours with true cordiality,

R. M. K.

FIELD MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

London, June 12th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,

I have at this moment in my mind a strange conflict of contrition, shame, and repentance, mixed with pleasure and sincere satisfaction: the last from the

* The seat of Mr. Drummond in Hampshire.

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great assurance your two letters give me against the failure of your usual friendship and goodness; and the former, most justly, from my scandalous neglect to acknowledge the merit of these proofs of them. You say, besides, a thousand things which claim my earliest attention, as they every way interest my heart. All that effects your situation, fortune, or feelings, does so; but seem doubly to do so, when those feelings sympathise with my own; and I can't say in how many circumstances the things you say of yourself, tally with those which daily occur to me. Many in our fortunes, many in our minds, are the same; though our situations are now pretty different. The compensations Nature has contrived, to suit our various situations, are surely among the kindest of her works; 'tis they which seem to level all conditions, and procure a kind of balance to keep the philosophic mind always in its position. I believe that the little commotions and deviations which appear to throw us out of our bias, should be considered rather as benefits than misfortunes; as they create a kind of active sensation which stirs and animates. Perfect happiness is not our destination here; and complete contentment would create a sort of stagnation hurtful to it. We must, I believe, have something to expect, and wish, as well as to enjoy. What enjoyment alone may do in a future state, I know not; but here below, I am persuaded we require a little spur.

You can't imagine how pleased and happy you make us, in even a distant hope that you may one day be of our neighbourhood. Remember, however, that life is short at its best, and precarious, and that age steals upon us; therefore, I would fain we should make our hay while the remaining sun shines; and if I knew the time, I would with peculiar ardour set about to prepare your nest as we have settled.

En attendant, je me console comme je puis. I am a

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perfect male Penelope in your absence, busier than a bee or spider, making webs and houses, and sowing and planting in fifty shapes, which I intend should make me very rich, but which, unfortunately, make me very poor at present; though, having amusement and expectancy, I am as happy as a richer man. And all this, with the much improved beauties of our little paradise, I desire you 'll lose no time in contemplating.

I doubt you 'll not yet break your Vienna bonds, nor give up your chimera of settling and moulding the hearts of all Christian Kings and Princes to your liking; but peace being now, I understand, agreed on, if not actually made, I think you may take the world off your shoulders for a short time, and let us see you in perfect idleness here. It will be a great relief to you to be rid of such a load; and we shall enjoy your good spirits* the better.

Accept Lady Aylesbury's kindest compliments, and believe me, dear Sir, with the greatest truth, and sincere esteem, your faithful servant,

H. Conway.

PRINCE FREDERICK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, August 9th, 1785.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to return you my most sincere thanks for your two very obliging letters, as well as for your kind congratulations upon the new title which his Majesty has been pleased to give me. I do not believe, at least at present, that I shall return to England; you may, however, depend upon it, that I shall take the

* Those of the noble old veteran, now verging on eighty, who, after filling the most stormy situations in actual warfare, and political life, and for many years presiding as Commander-in-Chief over the armies of his country, could not only enjoy his "little paradise," but build castles for the future, afford a delightful picture.

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very first opportunity to express to his Majesty how much I feel your goodness towards me during my stay at Vienna; and I can assure you that it would give me infinite pleasure, if it were in my power, to make you another visit.*

I am exceedingly sorry that Mr. Cooper, son to Sir Grey Cooper, left Brunswick without informing me; as I wished exceedingly to have sent you, by him, a list of words and names, which would have rendered our correspondence much easier. I shall, however, take the very first safe means to do so. Affairs are in a very unsettled state, and I confess I am very anxious to know how they will terminate.

Grenville desires me to give you his best compliments, and to say he would have written had I not been doing so. I am extremely happy to hear that the Pergens, Thuns, and Zichis, are all in good health. Pray, remember me to them in the strongest manner; and tell Madame de Zichi how glad I am that she was pleased with her reception in England.

Believe me, dear Sir, most sincerely, ever your most affectionate

FREDERICK.

* General Grenville, the Prince's companion, thus shortly after corroborates this :—"His Royal Highness," writes he, "desires to be particularly remembered to you, and all friends at Vienna. If he had the power of conveying himself, as quick as thought, wherever he wished, I should advise you to lose no time in dispatching cards, with all possible speed, to Mesdames Thun and Pergen, &c., for supper *this very evening!* But as we have no good-natured fairy to furnish us with supernatural powers, we must content ourselves with chewing the cud of your honour's good suppers (which is but poor amusement at all times, and more particularly as we have almost consumed our whole magazine—having been so often reduced to make use of this unsatisfactory resource), and with wishing you all health and happiness, from yours ever affectionately,

"R. GRENVILLE."

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MARSHAL CONWAY TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Park Place, 4th Sept., 1785.

DEAR SIR,

I am heartily grieved at the account you give me of your bad success with our ministers, on the interesting article of your *congé*, and think it mortifying that you, whom they find so useful in their negotiations, should have such difficulty in your own. There's no end of the evils, private and public, attending all political squabbles. It was among the laws of Sparta, or some wise Grecian state, that every citizen should take a part in all contests that were going on; but could a contrary injunction prevail, it would be well for the peace and happiness of mankind. There is an *old book*, little attended to, though well known, that teaches a very different doctrine. We are the children of peace by profession, and of discord by practice, and the whole system of mankind is a system of contention. One must leave the world actually to enjoy it, and if one has not great care, contention will follow even to our rural scenes. The pleasure of mutually tormenting seems the universal passion, and men affect it sometimes as completely about killing a hare, or the bounds of a dirty field, as about a kingdom. I have, I assure you, no such contentions, having, thank Heaven! no manorial rights, nor hunting district, like the wild Indians; so that, could we but catch you here, when your good stars shall consent to your retirement, and allow you to be *annihilated* like myself, you may pass a good peaceable sort of nonentity; so pray don't lose sight of your *castle*. You shall not want our assistance to build or realize it, and people live so much *in the air* now, it would be quite unfashionable to relinquish it.

Yours ever affectionately,

H. CONWAY.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO ANDREW DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Sept. 27th, 1785.

MY DEAR ANDREW,

I have not in many years received a letter which gave me so much heartfelt pleasure as yours of the 13th instant has done. It is written with that warmth of feeling and frankness of character which I hold so dear, and which render your friendship of inestimable value to me. I have nothing so much at heart in this world, as to cherish such sentiments in the minds of a few men of honour and truth, like yourself; and I swear to you, my dear Andrew, that there exists not upon earth a more cordial and deep-rooted attachment than that I feel for you in every sense and shape.

That I have not been a punctual correspondent of late, has been entirely owing to the uncertain and vexatious situation in which I have found myself for several months, both in regard to the public concerns and my own. I have (in common with most of my brother politicians) thought myself on the eve of an important crisis in Europe; which would either enkindle the flame of war on the Continent, or establish the public tranquillity upon such a solid basis, as to leave me master of my own time and actions. I have been drawn on, from week to week, in the hope of being able to hold to you a decisive language upon the *first* of these subjects, and to give you a just idea of my personal plans for the enjoyment of that leisure which a general pacification would procure me.

The slowness or the obstinacy of these *mad* Hollanders, (for mad they are, and ungrateful too, to the highest pitch,) have to this hour kept me in teasing suspense; and my only comfort is that matters have now been brought by the Emperor to the peremptory decision of a *yes* or *no*, which they must ere now

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have pronounced: and which will be echoed through France to Vienna in the course of eight-and-forty hours. The courier charged with this important *monosyllable* (and probably with ten sheets of nonsense to elucidate and justify it) may, perhaps, be galloping at this moment into the walls of this capital; and you, my dear Andrew, who live next door to these doughty Burgomasters, are, no doubt, informed of their final resolution before this time. I was long in the belief that Old England was the only country in modern Europe where civil dissension was often called in by *staunch patriots* to enliven the dulness of foreign warfare! I see that the States of Holland take a pleasure in quarrelling among themselves, and in chasing away their hereditary benefactor, the Stadtholder, at the same instant that an incensed monarch, who has an army of three hundred thousand men, is drawing near to their frontiers. They have copied some parts of *our* late conduct very exactly; let us see if it will be with a success equal to that *we* had to boast of at the end of the last war.

I am much pleased with the sketch of what you believe to be Mr. Pitt's general plan, and I heartily wish him success in the pursuit of each of his favourite objects.

It appears to me by the last mail, that the Irish are beginning to feel, and to acknowledge, the necessity of accepting (though with some variation of phraseology) of the principal articles so *generously* proposed to them by Great Britain; and I trust that in the next session of Parliament, all will be properly adjusted, and to the mutual satisfaction and advantage of *both* kingdoms. Whoever opposes that agreement is an enemy to *both*.

Wednesday, 28th.

I have purposely delayed the conclusion of this epistle, in hopes of receiving the long-wished-for

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intelligence relative to the Dutch affairs. I am not, however, a bit wiser than I was yesterday, and no courier has yet arrived; let me, then, chat with you, keeping clear of all tiresome politics.

I am to have a prodigious colony of John Bulls this winter: Lords Wycombe, Ancram, Guildford, Glasgow, Dungannon, &c., &c., and commoners *by scores*. Alas! my poor Tweedale acres! but *their* fate has been long pronounced. I wish I had ten minutes' conversation with your young Minister;* I think I could convince him (and without a grain of self-sufficiency) that it can hardly be for the honour of government that a man who has sat twelve successive years at his post, endeavouring to render service to his country, and presenting in that space of time *four hundred* young gentlemen at the Imperial Court, should be driven to downright beggary. But, my dear Andrew, my superiors seem to know that poverty and I are upon terms of good fellowship, and can jog on cheerfully through the rest of our course. Be it so, if it must be so!

I did not plague my friends with a long dull account of my late narrow escape from drowning, because I never thought it would be *hitched* into a newspaper! The bursting of a kind of water-spout that day had indeed the most extraordinary effects,' and laid a whole tract of country under water in *less than an hour*. I found it extremely difficult to get through the torrents on horseback even next day, and it was attended with some danger. The man who *was* drowned was a perfect stranger to me—a butcher's servant who joined me on the road, and (so far from being my *guide*) he *followed* me through the first torrent, and perished in the second, whilst I was talking to some peasants on the opposite bank, and had no idea of making even the *attempt* to

* The interview, when obtained (in 1789), led *immediately* to the desired conclusion.

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cross it. I helped to take his body out of the water, and had every chirurgical assistance brought to recover him, but all in vain. There is the story, my dear Andrew. A great many country people perished, but only this one in my view.* Adieu, ever yours,

R. M. K.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have learned that a courier is arrived from Paris, with news of the signature of preliminaries between the Emperor and Holland.

GENERAL WIMPFFEN TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Warsaw, 3rd Janvier, 1786.

VOTRE EXCELLENCE,

Comme je dois espérer, aura reçu la lettre que je pris la liberté de lui écrire, après l'imminent danger dont la Divine Providence l'a si *miraculeusement* sauvé; à laquelle, avec maintes autres, j'ai témoigné ma juste réconnoissance. Je supplie vôtre Excellence de vouloir aussi, en l'entrée de cette nouvelle carrière, reçevoir mes vœux de *gratitude*, que j'adresse au monarque de l'univers, pour la conservation précieuse de vôtre illustre personne; et d'être le récompenseur des bienfaits, aussi grands et aussi rares, dont il a plu à vôtre Excellence de me combler. Elles ont changé ma *misfortune* en bonheur, conservé mon honneur, et, bréf, il n'appartient qu'à des grandes âmes, rares comme celle

* The danger (on what excursion, to Carlsbad, or elsewhere, is not known) of which Sir Robert, partly from natural intrepidity makes so light, and which he had altogether considerately concealed from his English friends, must have been very *imminent*, to draw forth from a brother soldier, and a distinguished one, the following letter; the veneration and gratitude expressed in which, (and towards a fellow-mortal, almost verging on impiety), bear testimony to the magnitude of the obligations (totally unrecorded, even in the confidence of friendship, by himself) conferred on the writer by Sir R. M. Keith.

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de vôtre Excellence, de faire des actions aussi nobles et généreuses comme celle qu'elle a fait sur moi. Pour encore plus graver ma *gratitude* sur mon âme, je possède l'illustre portrait de vôtre Excellence, toujours devant mes yeux, que j'adore comme un Dieu, qui honore les vertus; et je ne mourrai pas content si avant ma fin je ne deviens encore si fortuné pour avoir l'honneur d'envisager l'illustre originel. Que Dieu et votre Excellence me fassent cette grâce!

Nous n'avons point de nouvelles dans ce pays-ci, dignes des attentions de vôtre Excellence; sinon que le Roi de Prusse fait des préparations en ses troupes, qui annoncent que pour le printems, il a l'envie de quelque point nouveau. J'attendrai toujours par un bonheur inoui d'être honoré des ordres de vôtre Excellence, pour avoir celui de l'assurer de ma juste *gratitude*, et de la vénération profonde avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être

Son très humble, &c. &c.

BROWN.*

LETTER FROM BARON TRENCK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Zverback, proche de Moelck, le 27 Janvier, 1786.

VÔTRE EXCELLENCE,

Le continu de celle-cy vous paraitra singulier. C'est un Allemand, un étranger, un avanturier, honnête homme; qui cherche la grandeur d'âme d'un Anglais. Je vous connais, my lord; vôtre respectable Père était déjà mon protecteur, et vous serez mon bienfaiteur dans un cas où je merite l'appui des sages et grands de mes contemporains. Au moins, je ne mériterai pas vôtre mépris, par ma confiance raisonnée. Je ne suis ni mendiant, ni trompeur, ni lâche. Je suis le sacrifice

* The worthy man, whose *gratitude* (a word he transplants into French, as well as *misfortune*) thus overflows, was, like many of the imperial generals, of British extraction.

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le plus sanglant de ma franchise, et de ma vertu inébranlable; le jouet du sort humain, et la dupe d'un souverain ingrat.

L'explication de ma situation actuelle demande un volume; le-voicy en abrégé, pour ne pas ennuyer vôtre patience. J'ai acheté l'année 1779, une terre en Autriche, des débris de mon bien saccagé; pour jouir d'une vie tranquille jusqu'à la mort du Roi de Prusse, après laquelle je suis assuré de jouir un rôle brillant, en cas que l'ambition me fouetterait pour retourner dans le tourbillon du monde.

Depuis que je suis campagnard, j'ai essuyé deux fois une destruction totale par la grêle et trois inondations. Les chicanes de mes ennemis à Vienne ont achevé ma ruine; et me voici avec huit enfans, réduit quasi à la besace. L'Empereur m'attend à sa porte; mais mon sort ne dependra pas de sa digestion. J'ai des raisons pour refuser ses grâces; bien moins pour les chercher en rampant, parce qu'il m'a refusé mon droit, et manqué de parole.

J'ai donc entrepris un ouvrage littéraire, que j'ai annoncé en huit tomes par prémuneration, pour gagner mes besoins pour l'education de ma famille. Le premier tome a paru au 15 Janvier. Mais mes ennemis obtinrent de la censure une defense rigoureuse, avec punition de cent ducats contre l'imprimeur.

Me voilà donc dans un embarras sans égale. En honnête homme je dois payer pour le pauvre imprimeur, je dois rembourser les souscripteurs—et j'ai déjà employé 1200 florins dans l'ouvrage; le troisième tome étant déjà achevé. Il est vrai que cette entreprise me donnera un beau revenu dans l'empire, dans la Saxe, et les états Prussiens, mais il s'agit de ma disette actuelle; et nulle ressource à Vienne pour moi.

J'ai toujours écrit contre le despotisme, contre les fripons, et contre les moines. Dans chaque collège de

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justice il y a toujours quelque fanatique, ou lâche; et voilà la source des persécutions que j'essayerai pour la vie en Autriche.

J'ai ruminé sur toutes les ressources possibles, dans ce moment critique qui presse. J'ai trouvé quelques remèdes; mais il me manque encore envers 400 ou 500 florins, sans lesquels mon mal est absolument insurmontable, et me force peutêtre de quitter l'uniforme, ma pension, ma famille, et l'Etat.

C'est donc à vous, my lord, qui je m'adresse.* Soyez mon père, mon bienfaiteur! En cas de mèpris, de nonchalance, ou de refus, ne me donnez aucune réponse, je ne vous respecterai pas moins, n'ayant aucune droit pour exiger votre générosité. Mais, si vous connaissez une partie de mon sort marâtre; si vous pénétrez dans le fond de mon âme dans ce moment où je me trouve forcé d'implorer votre secours, mettez ce que vous voulez risquer pour moi dans une lettre blanche, en papier de banque, avec les mots "Pour le Baron Trenck," et sur l'adresse "À Monsieur Vigand, Caffétier." Vous ne serez pas trompé. J'engage ma parole sacrée de vous rembourser après la foire de Leipzig, au premier d'Avril. Si je vous trompe, vous ne serez pas pauvre, et Trenck aura cessé d'être honnête homme. Lorsque vous me tirerez d'embarras, et que je vous aurai l'obligation de m'avoir soutenu dans mes catastrophes, mes actions prouveront combien j'étais digne d'être,

De vôtre Excellence,
Le plus humble et devoué serviteur,
FREDERICK BARON TRENCK, Major.

* This letter, from the celebrity of its writer, has been selected from hosts of similar appeals; seldom, it would appear, addressed in vain to one whose generosity far outstripped his means.

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SIR JOSEPH YORKE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, April 21st, 1785.

DEAR SIR,

Give me leave to recommend to your obliging countenance and protection the bearer hereof, my old schoolfellow, Mr. John Howard of Cardington, Bedfordshire, one of the most singular and humane characters of the age; whose unwearied pains and travels to endeavour to put our jails and workhouses on a better footing cannot be unknown to you. The parliament, and indeed the voice of the nation, speak his merit, and he has a right to the assistance of every one of us.

He desires to get all the information he can relative to the prisons and workhouses at Vienna, and elsewhere in the Austrian dominions; and the encouragement and good reception he has met with everywhere make one hope that he may be allowed to inquire into the regulations of the Austrian police relative to these objects. He is *certainly no spy*, but a worthy man of great family; and his only view is to be of some service in the cause of humanity. Our friend, Mr. William Eden, is a great friend of his, and pursues the same object.

I shall be much obliged to you for any civilities you shew, or any service you can do to Mr. Howard, and I remain, with unalterable esteem and affection, my dear sir, your most faithful and devoted servant,

JOSEPH YORKE.*

* The visit took place in the end of the year. A young Englishman thus mentions it:—"Sir Robert has lately been much taken up by a countryman of a very different description from those who usually frequent this place. It is the celebrated Mr. Howard, who has spent some days here from Turkey, and other places where the plague is frequent, in order to endeavour to discover some method to arrest the progress of that dreadful malady. He is at present in good health, but much attenuated. He takes no food but dry bread and tea, as he finds extreme temperance the best preservative against infection."

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COUNT ROSENBERG, IMPERIAL CHAMBERLAIN, TO SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH,

(APPOINTING A PRIVATE AUDIENCE FOR MR. HOWARD).

25 Fev., 1786.

MONSIEUR,

L'Empéreur désirant voir le célèbre Monsieur Howard, et sachant qu'il n'aime pas les cérémonies des cours, me charge de vous prier de faire savoir à cet ami des hommes, qu'il pourra se rendre à la Chancellerie de sa Majesté sur le Controler-gang, aujourd'hui, ou demain, à une heure après-midi. Il y aura quelqu'un à la porte, qui l'introduira immédiatement.

Je vous prie de me faire savoir si Monsieur Howard veindra aujourd'hui, ou demain; et de me croire avec un parfait devouement,

ROSENBERG.

MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

March 15th, 1786.

PERMIT me to make my grateful acknowledgments for the kind attention shown me during my stay at Vienna; a sense of the honour there done me will ever be a source of pleasure and gratitude.

I sent about ten days ago to Mr. Wiffin my last publication, requesting your acceptance of it, also a copy for Count Pergen, and Dr. Ingenhouz, and this day a book for a corner in the Emperor's library. The plans for the Lazaretto are engraving, but it will be the end of the year before I publish. I shall forward some of the first to your Excellency.

With great regard and much esteem, I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and obliged servant,

JOHN HOWARD.

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PRINCE ADAM CZARTORISKI TO SIR R. M. KEITH.*

Pulawy, 3rd April, 1786.

THE kind expressions of your letter of the 11th March cannot but raise the highest sense of pleasure and gratitude in a heart which, on so many good reasons, has contracted long ago (and will preserve for ever) the habit of loving and honouring you.

Lord Wycombe's and Major Green's trip to Pulawy is highly acceptable both to me and my family, at the time intended. In my answer to Lord Wycombe (which, according to permission, I put under your cover) I give the most exact directions what road they are to follow from Cracow. If cordiality, and the real pleasure they will give us in coming to take a peep at our country, can make up for the inconveniences they are likely to meet with, I hope they won't be altogether sorry to have undertaken the journey. Your mentioning that you would not dislike to be of the party, raises in my mind a train of ideas which I am loth to part with, as with a delightful dream. In this particular, I can only be sorry that my house is too much out of the way to be pitched upon as the place fit for a negotiation, or the signing of a treaty. I beg you will be thoroughly convinced that no man upon earth sets a greater value than I do on your friendship and esteem, and that I am inviolably for ever, my dearest sir,

Your faithful friend and most obedient servant,

ADAM CZARTORISKI.

Give me leave to send my best compliments to Mr. Straton, and to Arbuthnot.

* This letter, which does equal honour to the kindness of heart and *uncommon proficiency in English* of the noble writer, derives additional interest from the expression of sentiments of friendship hereditary on both sides; previous effusions of which, addressed to Mr. Keith, Sir Robert's father, have been inserted.

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LORD DARLINGTON TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cleveland House, May 7th, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is not easy to decide whether the father or the son are most flattered by your friendly attention, neither perhaps is it necessary. They both feel themselves highly indebted, and equally wish to prove their sense of the favour you confer. I venture to say *they*, because I can answer for myself; and my son, in a letter of the 22nd of last month, says, "I respect, adore, and love Sir Robert Keith, and wish I could ever possibly in any way be serviceable to him"—consequently 'tis evident your kindness has had its due weight, and I hope he will continue to deserve your countenance. Youth sometimes will swerve from the right path, but you, dear Sir Robert, who have so long been conversant with the world, will, I am sensible, be indulgent enough to make allowances.

The King knighted Lord Cornwallis the evening before his departure, in the most gracious manner possible, not one person present; at the same time acquainting him he had delayed it till that moment, that it might not be insinuated that the blue ribbon was the lure for the acceptance of the command he had undertaken.* Our Chancellor is recovered, who was for two days thought in the utmost danger.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient humble servant,

DARLINGTON.

* This delicacy in the monarch must have been dictated by the same feeling which prompted him to grant the investiture to Sir R. M. Keith, when in Denmark, by *anticipation*, "in order," he said, "to distinguish merit, independent of success."

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SIR JOHN SEBRIGHT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Beechwood, 10th August, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I do not know how to thank you as I ought for your kindness to me, and your kind intentions (still more precious) to my beloved son. These, my dear friend, are essential obligations, that if I know my heart I shall never forget, even if the affections of that heart had not already been yours; nor can Lady Sebright or I ever forget the honour and pleasure we received when my old and respectable friend, your father, gloriously supported by his two sons, was an inhabitant of this place. But somewhat too much of this. My dear son will have the honour to deliver himself and these credentials into the hands of my dear friend, Sir Robert Keith. With his milk he sucked in an affection for you and your family, which literally grew with his growth, and has been strengthened by Drummonds, Campbells, and the Lord knows who: for whenever he chances to say he is about to set out for Vienna, then your Excellency, and your several virtues, such as they are, as well as your kind attention to our countrymen, become the subject, not ungrateful to him who is about to avail himself of them!

My hand shakes, (for I am old), and I am going to the Drawing-room, with Lady Sebright, to assure their Majesties that *we* did not instigate our quondam housemaid, Margaret Nicholson,* to attempt his sacred life, which may God preserve! Lord Frederick showed me your last letter, which was as warm as that to me. Sebright sets out to-morrow; I commit him to your goodness and his own discretion; and now, my dear

* A mad woman, who fired a pistol at King George the Third.

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and much-valued friend, Sir Robert, I remain, with great respect and attachment,

Your for ever faithful and obliged,

J. SEBRIGHT.

THE DUKE OF YORK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, Sept. 22nd, 1786.

DEAR SIR,

I have many thanks to return you for your very obliging and confidential letter, which came safely to my hands. It was so long since I had had the pleasure of hearing from you, that I really was afraid you had quite forgotten me. I did not dare to answer it till now, that I avail myself of Monsieur Walmoden setting off for Vienna to write to you fully. The death of the King of Prussia made many people imagine we should very soon have a war. I confess I never was of that opinion, as you were so good as to inform me that it was not the wish of the Emperor; and I knew that the present King of Prussia was by no means desirous of drawing the sword. The manner in which he has began his reign does the greatest honour to his head and to his heart; and I daresay you will already be aware of what I told you when I had the pleasure of passing some very agreeable weeks with you at Vienna—that the world has been totally mistaken in this Prince. He has declared openly his attachment for England, and for an English alliance; and has given the strongest proofs of his sincerity in this respect by the manner in which he has received all the proposals of his uncle Prince Henry, who did, at first, everything in his power to persuade him into trying to gain over France. Indeed he is besides exceedingly angry with France, on account of the affairs of Holland. I have been told that there is almost a certainty of a

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war between the Russians and Turks; and that the Emperor does not intend to give any assistance to his ally the Empress. This, if really the case, will naturally break the great friendship which has for some time subsisted between the imperial courts; and which has alarmed all the rest of Europe so much. I will not add more on these subjects, on which you are so much better informed, but end by assuring you how sincerely I am, dear sir, most faithfully yours,

FREDERICK.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO A. B. DRUMMOND, ESQ.

Vienna, February 17th, 1787.

You are always the same warm-hearted and active friend, and I assure you, my dear Andrew, that I look upon your cordial attachment as one of the most valuable blessings of my life. Heartily sorry am I that I am not permitted to cultivate it, in the parish of St. Martin's; but this is likely to be a year of turmoil and trouble, in more quarters than one, and what with vapouring Turks and Russians on one hand, and frantic Hollanders on the other, I must not think of indulging my private wishes for the present. Other gentlemen of my cloth would perhaps think that a little haze in the wind's eye is not a sufficient reason for postponing personal enjoyments. But I have a *way of my own* in thinking of public duty; and my excellent friends of the "*Gang*" will not think the worse of me for it. Remember, my dear Andrew, that in mentioning the clouds I see hovering on the horizon, I am far from predicting a dangerous storm. These clouds may blow over, as a hundred others have done before; and at all events, I have the happiness to be persuaded that the British galley may remain in port, and keep clear of

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the squall, let it blow from what corner it may! So much for enigmatical politics!

The Empress of Russia's journey must necessarily make a great noise in Europe, and the hundred thousand soldiers who attend the progress may perhaps make some stir in Turkey. We suppose that she arrived at Kiew on the 16th instant, and we expect letters from thence every hour. The Emperor will probably set out before the middle of March, and (without a single soldier to attend him) will probably join her at *Cherson*, in the end of April. Oh! that he would tell a body, when he comes back, what he has seen and heard.

Yours truly,

R. M. K.

The above exclamation it is impossible to avoid echoing, notwithstanding the amusing volumes in which the witty Prince de Ligne has embodied the *memorabilia* of the brilliant Crimean progress; which, a mere matter of fact letter, dated *Cherson* (from Mr. Fitzherbert, who accompanied the Empress as British minister), informs Sir R. Keith was by no means productive of the same enthusiasm on the Emperor's part, as the interview of the sovereigns some years before.

Equally impossible is it to avoid regretting the unfortunate destruction of Sir Robert Keith's letters to his own family during the whole reign of a man, with whom he enjoyed (from his simple unostentatious habits, and avowed predilection for the British envoy) the most unrestrained facilities of intercourse. We learn (from the MS. journal of the same traveller, so often before quoted) that Joseph was in the habit of dropping in frequently at Madame de Pergen's (where Sir Robert Keith passed most of his evenings) with so little state or ceremony, as not even to interrupt the game at "Ombre" which his hostess and her guests might be

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engaged in. "And on these occasions" (adds the narrator, rather tantalisingly,) "the Emperor would laugh heartily with the young ladies, and tell a number of excellent stories." Most of these have been lost to posterity, as well as the particulars of a facetious conversation, occurring on an occasion when the same gentleman* was present. One of them, however, has since been recovered, and is well worth narrating:—"The Emperor related a circumstance which had just happened, and which amused us very much. One of the town prisons had been pulled down; a man purchased the ground where it stood; built a house and shop there, and put the Emperor's head for a sign. The magistrates of the town, thinking it disgraceful that his Imperial Majesty's head should be exposed in a place where malefactors had been confined, ordered it to be taken down. The man went to the Emperor, and complained of the expense he had been at, in having so fine a sign-post painted, and thought it hard it should be thrown away. The Emperor did not choose to contradict the magistrates; but he told the man to put a beard on the face, and a glory round the head, which would change it to *Saint* Joseph. This was accordingly done; I have since seen it, and I declare that I think none of the pictures done for the Emperor are so like him as the sign in its present state." The following account of the writer's public introduction, and other graphic particulars of the mode of life at Vienna, may serve to atone to the reader for the loss of similar anecdotes from Sir Robert's own pen.

"Last Sunday Sir Robert Keith presented me and the other English gentlemen here to the Emperor. We were eleven in number, and the suite of carriages

* The accomplished and lamented R. Arbuthnot, Esq., afterwards Colonial Secretary at Ceylon, and brother to the late Sir W. Arbuthnot.

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which followed Sir Robert's, made it look like the procession of an ambassador making his first visit. We found the antechamber pretty crowded, it being the first time the Emperor has seen company since his return from Italy. We found him standing alone, dressed as he always is, in uniform. The only ceremony at entrance, is making a low bow. I do not pretend to judge of the other qualities of the Emperor, but he certainly has as much the look and manners of a gentleman as any person I ever saw. He is a very well looking man, middle sized, with fair hair, and very light blue eyes. He has something so good-natured and frank in his appearance and behaviour, that one feels perfectly easy in his company, and even has a desire to enter into conversation with him. He seemed very glad to see Sir Robert again, and inquired very particularly about his health. He asked us from whence we came, if directly from England, or after having made the tour of Europe; said he hoped we would make a long stay at Vienna, and would amuse ourselves well while we remained.

"It being St. Thomas's-day the Emperor dined in public with the knights of the order of Maria-Theresa, instituted by the late Empress as a reward for military merit. It is something like that of St. Louis in France, but more honourable, as confined to a smaller number, and can be given to nobody in time of peace. It is divided into grand crosses, commanders, and simple knights; the grand crosses only dine in the same room with the Emperor. There are at present only four of them, all officers of great and distinguished character—Marshals Haddick, Laudohn, Lacy, and Nadasti; and it is singular enough, that not one of them is a German; for Lacy is an Irishman, Laudohn (though born in Livonia) of a Scotch family, and the other two are Hungarians. The Emperor seemed to be in high

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spirits, but did not eat a bit of an exceeding good dinner which was set before him. As soon as he sat down, he called Sir Robert Keith to stand by his chair, and *kept talking and laughing with him* all the time of dinner. He said, among other things, how happy a sovereign might think himself to have four such generals as those he saw before him; and added, that he was ashamed to think he was the only person present who had got that ribbon without having done anything to deserve it."

As a contrast to the stiff and magnificent entertainments which, to the young (though already far travelled and superior minded) observer, seemed intolerably tedious, the following particulars are given of the free, unceremonious style of living, even under the Emperor's roof, among the *élite* of Viennese society who formed his country circle:—"The Emperor is gone for three weeks to Laxemberg, and Vienna is quite dull in consequence, for he has carried off with him all the most agreeable people in town. Twenty gentlemen and twelve ladies have accompanied him; and Madame de Thun and her two daughters are of the latter number. They pass their time in the pleasantest manner possible; and there is not the slightest constraint. All lodge in the palace, but are as much at home as if they were in their own houses. All do as they choose in the mornings, but dine and sup together at two tables; at either of which the Emperor, as it happens, takes his seat."

"A circumstance took place last night which will surprise those who look upon Vienna as the seat of form and etiquette. There was a fire-work in the Prater, which finished about ten o'clock. Twelve gentlemen and ladies of the very highest rank in this country, who met there, went afterward to sup in one of the little *guinguettes*, where the common people amuse themselves. They remained there till midnight,

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when, as the night was remarkably fine, one of the company proposed that, instead of going to bed, they should immediately set out for Laxemberg, and pay a visit to Madame de Thun. This plan being agreed to, they got a common waggon, into which they all packed themselves. Prince Louis Lichtenstein, who was one of the party, took four horses from his carriage and put them to it. Another gentleman drove; and in this equipage they got to Laxemberg about two in the morning, drove straight up to the palace, made so much noise as to awaken every body, and having raised Madame de Thun from her bed, remained with her until day-break, when they returned to Vienna, and went through the streets in their cart, to the astonishment of all who saw them. I believe you will allow that there is no other Court in Europe where people could take such liberty." *

The general style of winter society in Vienna is thus described:—"Every night in the week there is an assembly somewhere. They begin about nine o'clock after the play, and people converse or walk about till eleven. Then comes supper, which is generally very splendid; indeed the great nobility live here in a style of magnificence, of which in England we have no idea. I have already dined or supped at Count Hatzfeldt's, Prince Galitzin's, the Marquis de Noiailles', Prince

* The toleration here of similar harmless frolics, and prevalence of another similar amusement styled a *Barouchade*, in which, in the carriages newly invented under that name, large parties of the *élite* of Vienna drove out into the villages round the neighbourhood, to walk about, *drink milk*, and dance under the trees, may serve to account for that indulgence in rural pleasures, and what were in France styled undignified recreations, so fatal to the Emperor's sister, poor Marie-Antoinette. It is a curious coincidence that the writer who narrates their perfect impunity at Vienna, should have been an *eye-witness* and narrator also (in letters to Sir R. M. Keith) of the first calamitous events of the French Revolution.

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Paar's, Prince Colloredo's, and Prince Kaunitz's. I was very desirous to see this last great politician, who, for thirty-five years, has governed the German empire with absolute authority. He is a man of superior abilities, and one of the first statesmen that ever existed; but he is at least as much distinguished for his singularities and oddities as for his genius and talents. He is remarkably cold and inattentive to strangers, sometimes scarcely deigning to speak to them; but his respect for Sir Robert Keith makes him tolerably civil to every person who is presented by him. The common hour of dining at Vienna is half-past two, and nobody dines after three; but the rules which are made for the common run of mankind are not in the least observed by Prince Kaunitz. He never sits down to table until past five, and very often not till night. This circumstance is very inconvenient, as nobody can know at what time to go to him. The day I first dined there, the company were assembled at half-past five, and it was past seven before he made his appearance, and he never thought of making any apology."

THE DUKE OF YORK TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hanover, July 1st, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I am quite ashamed of not having sooner answered your last very obliging letter, but for those last two months I have been so continually travelling about, that it really has not been in my power to return you all the thanks I owe for the very interesting intelligence which your letter contained. I am, I confess, exceedingly anxious to know how the interview between the Emperor and Empress of Russia has gone off. The meeting between those two great personages will cause great alarm all over Europe. The last time they met,

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the great projects which have frightened Germany so much were first brought upon the carpet, and every body here fears this interview is intended to bring them to maturity. His Imperial Majesty has, however, at present, his hands full; and it appears as if it would be no easy matter to bring the Flanderkins to rights again.

I passed my time very agreeably at Berlin, and cannot sufficiently express how much I was flattered by the very distinguished manner in which the King behaved towards me. This day three weeks I shall set out upon my return home. It is not necessary, I am sure, to express to you how impatient I am to return, as it is near seven long years since I left England.

Give me leave to assure you, that it is always with the greatest pleasure that I think of the very agreeable time which I passed at Vienna, which was certainly owing to the very great civilities and attentions which I received from you; and I shall be most exceedingly happy if at any time it is in my power to be of use to you, and to prove to you how sincerely I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Yours most affectionately,

FREDERICK.

P.S.—Is there any probability of our meeting in Old England?

SIR RALPH PAYNE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Lyons, November 1st, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Your memory is as excellent, and as much to be depended on, in offices of friendship, as it is in events of history;* nor has it ever been more an object of

* The extensive acquaintance with historical events and characters here alluded to, had earned for Sir R. M. Keith, it would seem, from the

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admiration upon the latter occasion, than it is of Lady Payne's * and my very affectionate gratitude upon the former. If our feelings on all your friendly and uniform attentions to us while at, or since we have left Vienna, were a circumstance of the least degree of value to you, I would take some pains to express them; but as they can be of no further importance to you than that of giving you the satisfaction of knowing that you have not been lavishing your friendship on objects who are not duly sensible of its worth, I leave the proofs of our desert of it to the test of time, which we trust, will not for ever leave us destitute of the power of displaying them.

If I make no attempt to describe to you our sentiments on this occasion, it is because I know myself unequal to the task; and because we entertain the most confident dependance on your adding one more act

following extract, an European reputation, founded on his skilful practice (some say invention) of a *Jeu de Société*, since a favourite one with the late Mr. Canning, under the name of the "*Twelve*," or "*Twenty Questions;*" by the skilful proposing of which, Sir Robert was enabled to guess the minutest particular connected with the most recondite personage mentioned in sacred or secular history. A friend from Paris thus writes:—"A few days ago, I happened to be in company with some French *Savans*, when one of them (Monsieur Suard) hearing that I had been at Vienna, asked me if I knew anything of your talent for *guessing*, of which he had often heard, and which he did not at all comprehend. I told him that I had been witness to it twenty times; and had myself more than once proposed things to you which I thought extremely difficult, but which you had discovered with the greatest ease. As everybody seemed most desirous of knowing how you proceeded, and I recollected the questions you asked of Monsieur de Souza, by which you guessed *Don Juan de Castro's whiskers*, I repeated them. This only served to increase their astonishment; and every person allowed that the whole forty members of the French Academy could not do as much."

* The lady, in whose house in Grafton-street, Lord Chancellor Erskine, on her being taken ill, wrote the well-known couplet—

"'Tis true I am ill, but I need not complain,
For he never knew pleasure, who never knew *Payne*."

Sir Ralph Payne afterwards became Lord Lavington.

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of friendship to the numberless others we have experienced from you, by persuading yourself that we are destitute of no one sentiment for you which the heartiest gratitude, the sincerest respect, and the most affectionate attachment can inspire. God bless you, my dear Sir, in every step, wish, and circumstance of your life! May fortune strew your path with her choicest gifts, go where you will. I speculate that your first *going* will be to England; and though I pretend to very little intuition into the womb of futurity, the interest which I take in your horoscope tempts me to hazard a guess what will happen when our ministers at home lay their hands upon you!

Apropos of such subjects. When I was at Zurich, where I staid a couple of days, I paid a visit to, and spent two or three hours each day with Lavater; and I will annex a memorandum which I copied from his note-book, on Charles Fox's physiognomy, which he had an opportunity of examining about a couple of months ago, at Berne, where he met him accidentally. Fox has this autumn been making a tour of Switzerland; whence he went by Milan to Turin, and I expect him here every hour. Adieu, dear Sir; that every real good, and pleasant accessory may attend you, is the sincere wish of

Your very faithful and affectionate servant,

RALPH PAYNE.

PHYSIOGNOMY OF MR. FOX BY LAVATER.

Front—Inépuisable; plus de richesse d'idées, et d'images, que je n'ai jamais vu peint sur *aucune physionomie au monde.*

Sourcils—Superbes, regnants, dominants.

Nez—Médiocre.

Les Yeux—Remplis de génie, perçans, fascinants, magiques.

Les Joues—Sensuels.

Bouche—Pleine d'une volubilité surprenante et agréable; et le bas du visage doux, affable, sociable. (LAVATER, Pinxit.)

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MR. ARBUTHNOT TO SIR R. M. KEITH.*

Paris, July 28th, 1789.

My dear Sir Robert,

Your letter of the 21st only reached me yesterday; the delivery of letters for some time past has been very irregular, which, indeed, is not much to be wondered at.

The revolution in the French constitution and government, may now, I think, be looked upon as completed, beyond all fear of any further attempt being made by the Court party, to defeat it. The entrance of the King into Paris was certainly one of the most humiliating steps that could possibly be taken. He was actually led in triumph, like a tame bear, by the Deputies and the city militia. The whole party inimical to the rights of the people, are dispersed. The Count d'Artois and his whole family, (except the Countess, who is much beloved,) the Condès, Contis, Polignacs, Bréteuils, and Vaudreuils, &c.—are all fled; and people are talking of confiscating their estates. The news we have from the provinces are much more favourable than could have been expected. Everywhere the people and the soldiers seem to have been animated with the same spirit. In Brittany, where the greatest apprehensions were entertained, the soldiers refused to obey their officers, and many of them joined the

* A series of letters, from the same gentleman to Sir R. M. Keith, detailing from day to day the events and progress of the no longer solitary French Revolution, had been laid aside; as affording, inevitably, from the voluminous chronicles already published, no new matter on an exhausted subject. The striking coincidences, however, occurring in these unstudied epistles, between its first steps and those of that *third* convulsion, which we have recently witnessed, has suggested the insertion of one of them, which (but for the "shadow with a kingly crown," which it still represents as existing upon sufferance) might be read as a newspaper paragraph of 1848!

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people. Fifty thousand Bretons were in arms, ready to march to the assistance of the Parisians; and there is no doubt that if the King had not come round, they would not have left a nobleman's house standing in the whole province. There certainly never was an instance of so astonishing a revolution operated *almost without bloodshed*; and without the people being led on by any leader or any party, but merely by the general diffusion of reason and philosophy.

We shall soon be able to form a guess of what is the nature of the constitution that is intended to be adopted in France. A committee of *eight members* is chosen to form a plan, which will afterwards be laid before the whole assembly for its approbation. The three persons who will probably have the greatest share in this important work, are Monsieur Mounier, the Abbé Sièyes, and the Count de Clermont Tonnerre, all three men of first-rate abilities. From what is known of their ideas and principles, it is thought the executive power will be left solely to the King, who will be deprived of all share in the legislative authority, which will be lodged in the National Assembly, formed into one body, without distinction of orders. Another particular in which it is thought the French constitution will differ essentially from ours, will be to have a power in the state superior to that of the National Assembly, by leaving to the *people*, in great and important points, the right of controlling the proceedings of their representatives, as in the United States. Several years must pass over, before we can judge of the *advantages* or *disadvantages* of such a form of government.

P.S.—A friend of mine (on whose opinion I place reliance,) Vice-president of one of the districts, has just come to me, and advised me to leave Paris without delay. A number of ridiculous reports have been

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propagated, of the English giving money to the mob, with a view of increasing the disturbances. Although inclined to think my informant's apprehensions groundless, yet, in consideration of those which may be felt by the friends of Sir John B., I shall follow the advice; I have accordingly ordered post-horses, and shall *be off in an hour*. Yours, &c.,

R. A.

MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Petersburgh, September 8th, 1789.

SIR,

I hope your Excellency is well. Since I had the pleasure of seeing you, I have visited Amsterdam, Osnaburgh, Hanover, Berlin, Riga, &c., &c. I leave this city for Moscow next week. I stop there about a fortnight and proceed to Warsaw, Presburg, and Trieste. All intercourse with Turkey is now finally stopped at the Black Sea.

I receive, by your letter, all possible attention from Mr. Whitworth, who has been so kind as to procure me a courier's pass, by which I go smoothly on, without stopping for horses; which is often the case when there are ten or twelve in the stable at the post-houses.

I would, Sir, request a pass for myself and one English servant, which will enable me to pass with more security and comfort through the Emperor's country.

With the truest esteem and regard,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

JOHN HOWARD.

The following, and concluding letter, derives a melancholy interest from being, if not the last, probably one of the very last, ever penned by the philanthropic writer:—

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MR. HOWARD TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Cherson, November 23*d*, 1789.

SIR,

I have received your kind letter with the passport. Had I come by Presburg, I should have thought it my duty to pay my respects to your Excellency; but I found the hospitals in sad disorder in the north of Russia, and being assured that 70,000 recruits, sailors and soldiers, died in them last year, determined me to visit the army and navy hospitals in the south. Here, I find them much worse; and 265 died at Wilowska, out of about 1500, last month.

I purpose next month, making the tour of the Crimea, and staying at Sevastopol some weeks, as the marine hospital is there; and shall take the first opportunity of crossing into Turkey. This country wants the zeal and attention of the Emperor, in whose success and happiness I exult. With much esteem, and my grateful acknowledgments for your very kind and constant attention,

I have the pleasure to subscribe myself, &c., &c.,

JOHN HOWARD.

In closing with the above remarkable letter, the series of Sir R. M. Keith's miscellaneous correspondence, the editor can only regret that more ample materials for selection than the fragmentary portions, and detached specimens alone preserved, were not at her command.

Had the unbroken correspondence of the writer with his own family been extant, instead of a few scattered epistles, which seem to have owed their preservation chiefly to the buoyancy of the lighter matters of which they treat—many anecdotes regarding persons, and remarks concerning events occurring in Austria, now discreetly suppressed, might have ministered amusement to the curiosity of the reader.

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But in drawing it may, perhaps, be thought too freely, on the scanty relics treasured by the affection of a few faithful friends of "sixty years ago," the editor has at least the satisfaction of reflecting, that no sentiment has found a place not calculated either to enhance respect or create regard for its long unconscious writer; or to throw light, in some one or other of its various phases, on a character whose like the widely-altered features of society make improbable we shall ever look upon again. This last opinion, it is believed, the graver succeeding portion of the work (embracing Sir R. M. Keith's inedited political transactions) will rather verify than disprove.

The journey of Sir R. Murray Keith to his native country in 1788-9, not, as we have seen him frequently anticipate, on an excursion of pleasure, to recruit his jaded spirits among a chosen set of friends, but to vindicate, by *vivâ voce* representations, his own honour and that of the service he had so deeply at heart, from a course of official neglect which he had long vainly deprecated in writing, forms an episode so truly illustrative of his character, that its personal nature would scarcely justify even an uninterested biographer for withholding it. On one, with whom the earnest and truthful delineation of the man, yet more than of the minister, is a paramount consideration, it seems imperative to contrast the prevailing *bonhommie* and good humour which formed such prominent features in the character of Sir R. M. Keith, with the keen, yet dignified assertion of his public and private rights, which circumstances, happily rare, could call forth; to prove what the general strain of his correspondence might have led some almost to doubt, that he who, as had been said of him while in Denmark, could "browbeat one queen in rescue of another," could beard a minister

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(one, too, with whom he had lived for years in private as well as public good fellowship) when his own honour and his master's interests were at stake.

Nor, firm, determined, nay bold, perhaps, beyond ministerial precedent, as was the tenor of those communications, (whose anomalous nature, at once official and personal, will serve as a transition link between the private and public portions of the present correspondence) is it less honourable to either party—the official superior or the remonstrating envoy—that when all had ended triumphantly to the satisfaction of the latter, no leaven of remaining bitterness seems—spite of an encounter of words so sharp and menacing—to have lingered in the breast of the party addressed with such unministerial boldness. That, with the occasion, all trace of it vanished from the kind, frank nature of the writer, none who have read his heart in his letters, can for a moment doubt.

The minister under whom Sir R. M. Keith was at this time serving (the *tenth* Secretary of State, with whom his twenty-seven years of diplomatic life had brought him in contact) was the Marquis of Caermarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds; who, like all his predecessors, had testified towards Sir Robert not merely uniform approbation and a high appreciation of his political conduct, but a warmth of personal intimacy, which a few familiar epistles, of a nature rarely emanating from Downing Street, survive to attest.

Whether, however, from constitutional indolence, or that absorption in the interests of party at home, to which Walpole and others remark the foreign relations of England to have been frequently sacrificed, her representative at the Court of Vienna (happily for her and himself no novice) was frequently left for months together without a word in answer to his voluminous and valuable dispatches, or a ray of light as to the views and intentions of government, to guide his steps

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through the crooked and perplexing mazes of Austrian politics. His complaints on this subject, however well-founded, partook for long of his wonted good humour and forbearance; nor did these, be it observed, even while offensively disregarded, abate one jot of the zeal and minuteness with which he continued to forward information of the utmost importance in the then critical state of Europe.

Of the quality and value of these communications, the specimen, perhaps, most acceptable to the reader, will be found in the dispatch containing the graphic record of one of the frequent confidential conversations which the Emperor Joseph, during his whole reign, was in the habit of holding with the British Envoy; who, having hailed the auspicious dawn of a sway from which so much was, alas! in vain, anticipated, had retained a predilection for the man long after he had ceased to approve the monarch.

How soon the halcyon prospects held out by the accession of Joseph were clouded by his precipitate attempts to press on his subjects unwelcome reforms, and how totally they were obscured by his later efforts to force those innovations at the point of the bayonet, is too well known.

But perhaps volumes—and these have been written on the subject—could not better paint the anomalies of the Prince's character, the results of a narrow and despotic education, blending with the headlong adoption of every crude and untried theory of modern innovation—than they exhibit themselves in a conversation, which, while it evinces the spirit of tyranny, which resistance to his plans had by this period developed and matured, does justice at the same time to the sincerity of purpose with which they were viewed as beneficial by their author.

Joseph, it may be mentioned, then fresh from his recent brilliant progress through the Crimea with his

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favourite ally, the Empress Catherine — courted by France—flushed with the expected submission of his revolted Flemish subjects—and about to set out on a campaign of anticipated triumph over the Turks (the fatigues and disasters of which, on the contrary, combined with the disappointment of his political projects, to give his yet unbroken health a blow from which it never recovered), held perhaps for the last time, in this interview, the haughty and exulting language, which adverse events, and the approach of the great teacher, Death, led him, happily for himself and his subjects, to retract, during the last hours of a lingering and painful, but firmly supported, illness.

[*Most Secret.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, August 3rd, 1787.

My Lord,

On Sunday last, I had the honour to present three English gentlemen to the Emperor. At the moment when he dismissed them, I took occasion to mention to the monarch a book which I had sent him the day before from the worthy and beneficent Mr. Howard, relating to the improvement of public prisons and hospitals.

As soon as my countrymen had left the Emperor's closet, and I found myself alone with him, I asked his leave to acquit myself of a commission which I had in express charge from my sovereign. The Emperor said "by all means," and in the most affable manner he led me by the arm to the upper end of the room. I then expressed to his Imperial Majesty (in an almost literal translation into French of the phrases contained in your lordship's dispatch) the very friendly sentiments of his Majesty; his real concern for the actual troubles in the Low Countries, and his wish that no evil consequences

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arising out of them, may disturb the prosperity of the Emperor's reign, or weaken his power.

I saw very visibly, by the Emperor's countenance, that this message gave him sincere pleasure. He again laid hold of my arm, and said, "I am greatly obliged to the King for a declaration so amiable, and I desire you to make known to your sovereign the just sense I entertain of its value. His Britannic Majesty knows, by his own experience, that it is the unhappy lot of monarchs to see their upright intentions frequently misapprehended, their views wilfully misconstrued, and their principles calumniated. He has seen the subjects of his distant dominions abandon their duty and allegiance, from false notions of liberty, and through the instigations of factious, selfish, and artful men. What have they gained,—even by the success of their audacious enterprise?—only anarchy and confusion.

"I have lately seen my subjects in the Netherlands on the very brink of open rebellion, from the frantic adoption of views which have been artfully and incessantly instilled into their minds by designing lawyers, bigotted priests, and a few men of higher birth, who are new-fangled dabblers in what *they* call patriotism. The feebleness of my government in the Low Countries had, by timid and unwarrantable concessions, in a manner encouraged the arrogant demands of my subjects, and by yielding a ready consent to every encroachment on my rights, the governors at length left to the Flemish leaders no other difficulty save that of *inventing* new pretensions. The only excuse those governors offered for their conduct was the solemn asseveration, repeated in every dispatch, that *this*, and *this*, and *this* must be conceded; otherwise the Low Countries would be inevitably and irrecoverably lost to the House of Austria. *I* never felt that danger; I never foresaw, and still less confirmed the concessions which, being

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granted by persons invested with no sort of authority to relinquish any of the rights of sovereignty, are in themselves *null and void*. The steps I have already taken, have in some degree opened the eyes of the Flemish nation, and I trust that I shall be able to bring them back to reason and justice. I am sensible that it is an arduous task, and I am unwilling to flatter myself *too soon;* but certainly, with the hearty desire of sparing fools and detecting knaves, I hope to convince the Flemish that I meant them no harm, and that an equitable line ought to be drawn between legal prerogative and constitutional principles."

All this was said very rapidly; and the Emperor, changing the subject, proceeded as follows:—"Your sovereign has a good deal of work on his hands in a neighbouring quarter. He is engaged in a ticklish discussion with the Court of France, in relation to the affairs of Holland."

This I acknowledged, and in the precise language of your lordship's dispatch, I represented, *fully and fairly*, the state of that business, assuring his Imperial Majesty that I was ordered to make to him every communication upon that subject which he should think proper to require; as my Court was fully persuaded that the independence of that Republic and the maintenance of its *ancient* constitution, were matters of very essential importance to the House of Austria.

The Emperor (without departing a single instant from that good-humoured affability which had reigned in his conversation) replied, in a tone bordering on jocular *irony*, "Independence! yes! and *old* constitution, if you please, too. But whatever concern foreign powers may have in keeping the Dutch Republic from falling to pieces, it can be of little, very little importance, indeed, to any other crowned heads save those who are related by blood or affinity to the Prince of

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Orange, whether there is, or is not, a Stadtholder in Holland; or, granting a magistrate of that denomination shall exist, whether his powers are enlarged or curtailed."

I replied, that to me it appeared perfectly clear that the maintenance, not only of the forms, but the principles of the *ancient* constitution of Holland was, in a very high degree, interesting to his Imperial Majesty; as that very faction which now governs the province of Holland, and from the most wicked motives oppresses the Prince of Orange and overturns every fundamental law, has eagerly sought to spread the same infectious spirit of licentious democracy and wild innovation among their neighbours the Flemings, whom they would have assisted with all their might, in their resistance to his government, if these lawless demagogues had remained masters *at home.* I ended by saying, that his Imperial Majesty's ancestors had experienced the value of that friendship which the Republic, under a well ordered government, could lend; and that (in my humble opinion) the actual situation of things rendered that consideration to the *full* as weighty now as at any former period. The Emperor, after attentively listening, resumed to this effect:—

"I will readily grant you, Sir, that the *patriots,* as they are pleased to call themselves, in Holland, have been extremely desirous to make proselytes to their doctrines every where. But it is not from them alone that my subjects in the Netherlands have borrowed the spirit of turbulent and mistaken patriotism. It is flaming forth in every petty state of that quarter of Europe. Not only at Liège, at Spa, and at Aix-la-Chapelle, but even in the Princess Cunegunda of Saxony's Abbey of Essen! Nay, let me tell you," continued the Emperor, "but only in the way of confidential conversation, that the King of France has

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acted very *unwisely*, not to use a *harsher* term, to have sown the seeds of that fructifying doctrine in his own dominions; by his late *assembly of the Notables*—he may expect the *inevitable growth of them throughout the whole of his future reign.*

"I have different notions about all that," pursued the monarch, "and I am determined to act in consequence of them. Yet I can lay my hand upon my heart and affirm, that I have not the smallest wish to infringe the just liberties of any set of men in any part of my dominions. As to the value of Dutch friendship or enmity, I will only say, that the ideas you allude to are founded upon principles of other times, and which are now wholly altered. Who amongst our predecessors would have foretold, or even believed, if another had predicted it, that Austria and France would at this time be in *alliance?* Yet you see that it is true, and that Holland is the ally of France, and has lately proved it by waging bitter war against England?"

I replied, that our ancestors had lost nothing in my estimation from not having foreseen events so *highly improbable* on every account. Before I could well make the remark, his Majesty gave another turn to the conversation by saying *abruptly*, "There is a new piece of intelligence respecting the Dutch affairs. We have learned that the King of Prussia is marching an army towards that country, and *report says*, in concert with the King of England, who is to take Hessians into his pay, and lend his Prussian Majesty his Hanoverian troops."

I answered, that though the second part of this intelligence was, to the best of my knowledge, without foundation, the former part of it was certainly true. That the march of a corps of Prussian troops seemed to me a very natural and justifiable measure, in order to obtain satisfaction for an egregious insult offered to

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that monarch's sister; an affair which I held to be wholly separate from the other disputes in the republic, which France, England, and Prussia, all appeared desirous to terminate by joint mediation.

"Insult! insult!" resumed the monarch, "that is an excellent word, and serves the purpose admirably when a pretext is wanted for sending troops into Holland. That the Dutch Burgomasters are *uncourtly* towards ladies, must be acknowledged; but between you and I, Sir, the real state of the case appears to me to be *this*: The States of Holland are unquestionably masters in their own country. They alone have the right to judge whether the wife of the Prince of Orange (a prince in their service, and now at open war with them) may make a visit to the Hague without any danger to their government. If they thought she could not, I am at a loss to conceive who can justly find a crime in their desiring to be excused receiving it. The manner may have been *improper*, the act is itself justifiable."*

* Among the inconsistencies of Joseph, few are more striking than this vindication, by a monarch bent on quelling by force insurrectionary movements in his own adjoining dominions, of an act of gross outrage, on the part of the Dutch leaders towards the wife of a Prince, whom this *democratic despot* is pleased to style their "Magistrate." The Prince of Orange having been obliged to return to Nimeguen, the Princess, whether from a confidence in her abilities (which were universally acknowledged), or in the influence which might be derived from her sex and dignity, adopted the resolution of proceeding down from Nimeguen to the Hague, with the view of entering into personal negotiation with the adverse party. But the spectacle of a princess, allied to one of the greatest royal houses, after being reduced to fly from her country, nobly rushing back and committing herself to the mercy of hostile factions, to plead the cause of her husband and children, was not to be rashly risked among a people, a great portion of whom were still attached to the House of Orange. The Princess, accompanied only by one lady, Count Bertrand, and an officer or two, was rudely arrested by a burgher guard who exhibited the exultation and disorder of a banditti who had seized a rich prey; and by their noise so startled the horses in the Princess's carriage, that she narrowly escaped being overturned into one of the canals. She

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I begged the Emperor's pardon for owning that I saw that matter in a very different light. Upon which he said, "It is indeed superfluous to dwell upon this point which is *foreign to me*.* Let us then," proceeded he, "return to the affairs of the Netherlands, in order that I may give you some idea of what I *expect* from thence, and of the plan of conduct I have laid down to myself."

In pursuance of this very gracious intention, his Imperial Majesty entered into a very long detail of circumstances, which I must abridge, in order not to swell this letter to an enormous bulk. He said it was a clear maxim with him that there could be no *separate*, still less any *repugnant* interests between sovereign and subject. That he had never entertained the most distant idea of enslaving the Flemings. Had such a purpose existed, he would have taken the opportunity when, at the end of the Dutch quarrel, he had sixty thousand soldiers in that country. That his journey to the Crimea at the moment when the new arrangements and reformation of the Courts of Justice were to be introduced, afforded a positive proof that he had no oppressive views. That he expected the deputies would soon arrive at Vienna, but without full power to *conclude* anything. "Perhaps," said he, "they will bring along with them a pretty large share of grievances, and a still larger one of *obstinacy*." That, nevertheless, as he had nothing to disguise, and had never yet found

and her *suite* were then dragged about as prisoners till about seven in the evening; when on arriving at a small inn, the captain of the free corps accompanied the Princess into her room, with his sword drawn in his hand, and sitting cross-legged by her side, ordered wine, beer, pipes, and tobacco!

* Little did even Joseph's lately uttered prognostics on French affairs enable him to foresee, that within three short years a *sister of his own* would be exposed to similar insult and detention, not in an attempt to re-enter, but to escape from a kingdom where her life was in danger!

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plain sense, and honest purpose *unpersuasive*, he thought he should persuade the deputies of two things: First, the constitution of their different provinces had been (notwithstanding its boasted excellence) extremely faulty in its first principles, and palpably inadequate to establish and enforce salutary laws for the general good, strict order and responsibility in matters of finance, and an impartial, as well as prompt distribution of justice in the different courts of law. Secondly, that the States had proved themselves neither *prudent* nor in *fact upright* guardians of the public purse; seeing that the Board of Treasury (chosen by themselves) had never, in the course of forty-four years, balanced or settled a *single accompt*, or known with certainty the truth of their own pecuniary situation. That upwards of five hundred petitions or remonstrances (of which he would produce a list) given into his *own hands* during his journey through the Low Countries, would *demonstrate* that their system of jurisdiction had been tardy, partial, and inefficacious; and that in reforming the law courts he had rendered the Flemings an essential service. That if he could be capable of wishing to make her subjects in those provinces *smart* for their present errors, he could do it, by leaving them in the hands of their blood-sucking lawyers, the real *pests* of their country. That he was determined, when he met the deputies, to debate every point with them coolly, but was equally resolved to be bullied into none; as he sincerely respected every real and essential article of their constitution. That this point once agreed on, sovereign and subject ought (and he hoped would) go *hand in hand* in regenerating good order and respect for law in every department and corner of the country.

"With these principles and views," continued he, "I am persuaded I ought to succeed; and the more so as both I and my subjects are by this time equally convinced

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that their means of resistance are much inferior to their former boastings. First, of all, they thought it morally impossible that from their local situation, and other imaginary advantages, I should ever attempt to reduce them *by force*. Secondly, if I undertook to do so, they were to raise and pay a *powerful* army; to send it to the Rhine, and to defend the passage of that river against my troops. Thirdly, as that project grew stale, and appeared to themselves impracticable, they were at last resolved to fortify every pass, every rivulet, and every cottage, and to fight for their country *step by step*. I leave you to judge, Sir, of the practicability of either of these schemes. My language in regard to their possible resistance has been *this*: 'You say, gentlemen, that I am to lose the Netherlands for *ever*; I tell you in return, that my monarchy is *indivisible*, and that I will risk the whole of it to preserve it entire. I should be truly sorry to order a single musket to be fired against any subject of my own. But before you dispose of my provinces so lightly, pray recollect what force you have to cope with; and be assured that that force shall be fully and strenuously exerted to bring you to your senses. You threaten me with emigrations; I shall be sorry for them; but valuable subjects and industrious men do not emigrate,* and your soil and your situation are in every respect too good and comfortable for you to abandon them lightly. The monied men,' say you, 'will quit the country: no such thing; monied men know their own interests, and I will make it clearly their's to remain where they are. You perhaps think you may indulge a little spirit of anarchy, and even try the weapons of *rebellion* without the dread of any fatal consequences; and that you can throw them aside when you are tired

* The well-read Joseph had surely forgotten the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the ancestors of those very Flemings transporting themselves to England.

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of them. In relation to this last point, I make to you, gentlemen, this explicit declaration. My subjects shall never have just cause to suspect me of being ambitious to grasp at inordinate power. They shall never be driven to extreme and violent measures by any voluntary act of mine. But that they may know what they have to expect in all *possible* cases, it is fit that you, gentlemen, should previously understand my notions in regard to every species of conquest.

" 'Should the chance of war render me master of a province wrested from an enemy, and relinquished to me without any conditional stipulations, I should think it my duty to respect private property, and the general laws and customs, when they did not manifestly clash with my system of government. But if any province of my monarchy should (which Heaven avert,) ever wield against me the sword of rebellion, and that I should succeed in re-conquering it by the same weapon, I publicly declare that I should look upon the entire property of every individual, of every rank and condition, who had taken up arms against my government, as irretrievably forfeited to the Crown; and the whole laws, privileges, and institutions of that country, wholly and solely at my disposition and mercy.'

"The last argument," pursued the monarch, "appears to have been one of the most pertinent and cogent that could be employed; and I have no doubt of its efficacy."

Having said this, his Imperial Majesty again pressed my arm, and after repeating the assurance that the commission I had executed by his Majesty's order, had given him real pleasure—he put an end to the conversation. I withdrew, after thanking the Emperor for his condescension, and begging him to remain persuaded that the happiness and prosperity of his reign are nowhere more ardently wished for than in England.

The above conversation requires no comment. I

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have omitted *much* to avoid prolixity; but I have certainly *mis-stated* nothing. The different expressions of my concurrence with, or dissent from, the monarch's opinions, which I introduced from time to time, are the less deserving of your lordship's notice, as they produced *no effect*. The Emperor's language was that of an *ally of France*, partial towards *her*, and viewing the Dutch affairs through a deceitful medium, strongly tinged with *her* false colouring. I beg permission, however, to make one observation before I conclude this long letter; that, however predominant his bias in favour of France may be, or whatever proofs his future conduct may furnish of her ascendancy over his councils, no one expression in the above conversation indicated (according to my judgment) his being absolutely *bound* by any engagement to act in concert with that power, in respect to the affairs of Holland. His mind may be prepared to adopt *false principles*, and pursue *impolitic measures*, but I am persuaded that his *hands* are *hitherto* at *liberty*.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, January 30th, 1788.

MY LORD,

It is matter of deep concern to me, to be reduced to the necessity of desiring your lordship to lay before his Majesty the following humble, yet most earnest request, which my actual situation renders not only reasonable, but strictly indispensable.

On the 4th of August, I sent to your lordship by the messenger Roworth, and on the 30th of the same month by the messenger Basilico, several letters, which were so far important, as they proved that the sentiments of this Court were far from being consonant to the King's wishes,

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and that the Porte had already declared war against Russia, in which war Austria must soon be involved.

In a dispatch of the 4th September, your lordship (after mentioning the receipt of those letters merely by the numbers marked on them), was pleased to signify to me his Majesty's high approbation of the language I voluntarily held in order to refute the calumnies of France at Constantinople, and gave me orders to repeat the same expressions in his Majesty's name. To these your lordship added the assurance, that the rupture with Turkey could make no change in the King's friendly sentiments towards his Imperial Majesty.

But it appeared, soon after, that the Emperor had very different views, and that he himself had been the proposer, at Petersburgh, of a triple alliance including France, in direct opposition to the interests of Great Britain, and which (if brought to a conclusion) must necessarily endanger the tranquillity of Europe.

Yet, from the date of the 14th September, to this hour, I have not been honoured with a single line of information or instruction relative to that very important matter, or to any object particularly relating to the affairs of Austria. Your subsequent dispatches, Nos. 10 and 11, relate solely to the Dutch affairs, and to the accommodation of our differences with France; No. 12 enclosed me the King's speech, and No. 13 only demanded information from me respecting the coinage of Austria.

This is the fifty-third letter I have written to the office, since I have received one word in direct answer to any of them.

A silence so long, and unprecedented, can only prove that the variable, and even the inimical politics of this Court, have justly become matter of so much indifference to Great Britain, that they neither call for animadversion, nor for solicitous investigation.

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I likewise draw from the duration of your lordship's silence this equitable conclusion, that the King has at present no business to transact at Vienna, and that, consequently, my presence there is in no shape necessary for his service.

On the other hand, my lord, it will not surprise you to learn, that after residing constantly, and with the most intense application to my duty, for twelve long years within the walls of Vienna, during which time I have presented to the sovereign, and exerted my best offices and hospitality towards above five hundred of our countrymen, my pecuniary circumstances, and my private affairs, stand greatly in need of my presence in Great Britain.

This exigency is considerably augmented by your lordship's not having favoured me with any sort of answer to a very candid, as well as respectful exposition of my circumstances and claims which came to your hands upwards of three months ago.

It, therefore, only remains for me to beg of your lordship, in your official capacity, to submit this letter without delay to his Majesty's benevolent consideration. I entertain the most sanguine hope that he will be graciously pleased to grant me a leave of absence for six months, and the permission to return to England, in the month of March or April. Mr. Stratton, who has served with zeal and capacity here as secretary for seven years, may (if your lordship thinks proper) be charged with the King's affairs, till my *return* to Vienna, and it will be of advantage to them that he should be honoured with the commission of his Majesty's Secretary of Legation.

I appeal to your lordship's justice for the fairness of what I have above stated, and I trust that the innate goodness, and long experienced favour of my sovereign, will once more be manifested towards his old faithful

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servant, by the speedy and complete gratification of those wishes, which my public and private duties have impelled me thus ardently to express.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The above public letter to the Marquis of Caermarthen was enclosed in a private letter to him of the following tenor:—

MY LORD,

At the same time that I give way to the irresistible motives which oblige me to request your lordship to lay before the King the enclosed letter *in extenso*, I am by no means unmindful of the deference which is due to my principal; and therefore have put my letter under a separate cover, that your lordship may order it to be decyphered by a confidential person.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, Feb. 27th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I had the honour to receive on Monday last your dispatch No. 1. I thank your lordship for having taken the earliest opportunity of laying before his Majesty my letter No. 13. That letter would never have had a place in the official correspondence, nor even have had an existence in thought, if, during five long months (and five months of a new war, in which three empires are actually engaged) I could have obtained, from my Secretary of State, one line of instructions regarding public affairs, or in answer to my respectful application touching my own most interesting private concerns.

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I wait with the reverence of grateful and affectionate duty, and with a confidence, founded on conscious rectitude, the decision of my gracious sovereign, and of his confidential servants, with respect to every part of my conduct.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The tone of the above letter—so indicative of the frank and confiding character of its writer, will prove how little his previous remonstrances were dictated by pique or personal resentment; a fact further corroborated by the enhanced minuteness of his official communications during the anxious period which immediately followed. That they failed in producing their legitimate effect, will appear from the following extract:—

[*Secret and Confidential.*]

Vienna, March 15*th*, 1788.

BY a courier who arrived here last night, from the Emperor, he sent back to Prince Kaunitz the last dispatches from Count Mercy. But it is believed that his Imperial Majesty dispatched, at the same time, a messenger to Petersburgh with his private letters to the Empress of Russia. My best endeavours to discover the purport of these important dispatches from Paris, have hitherto proved unsuccessful. But I hope in a day or two, to come at the knowledge of their general scope, and to learn whether France will openly thwart, privately counteract, or openly acquiesce in the establishment of that joint mediation which Prussia has held out at Petersburgh.

Your lordship will long ere now, have seen the unquestionable expediency of acquainting me with the real state of that important negotiation in which the King, our master, bears so large a share, and which, if

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it should ever meet with the acceptance of Russia, must be equally extended to the Court where I reside.

It is morally impossible, (I do your lordship the justice to believe it) that his Majesty's minister at Vienna, should ever find himself in the shameful situation of learning, from the steps which may hereafter be taken by the ministers of Prussia, the determination of the *English Cabinet*, in relation to points of the highest importance to Austria, and which must necessarily have the greatest influence on our general system of politics.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. KEITH.

The conciliatory and unselfish spirit in which some flattering assurances from head quarters (where we learn from private letters that his merits were, spite of unpardonable negligence, adequately appreciated) were met and acknowledged, is characteristic of the writer of the dispatch which follows:—

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, March 29th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I am truly grateful for the kind expressions which your lordship has employed in your dispatch No. 3; and I place the firmest reliance on the promise it contains, that his Majesty's confidential servants will even have the goodness to attend to my private concerns in the most friendly manner.

From the moment that Austria drew the sword against the Porte, I felt the palpable inexpediency of my obtaining (or even desiring to obtain) a leave of absence from my post. My private interests or wishes never have, nor ever shall come in the smallest degree of competition with my public duty; and my sole object henceforth

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shall be to render the keen and constant exertion of every faculty I possess as advantageous as possible to the King's service. It was with this view only that I have so frequently requested of your lordship that sort of authentic information which can alone give a public and useful direction to my researches into the mysterious schemes of this Court. The sketch your lordship has drawn in your last dispatch of the Emperor's policy in regard to France is perfectly just, and that exposition, together with the light you have had the goodness to afford me into the King's invariable desire and purpose to re-establish, if possible, the ancient and solid system of Europe, will serve to regulate every step of my conduct here. But, my lord, it cannot escape your penetration, that one-half of the secrets of the Austrian cabinet must necessarily have their existence at Petersburgh, and that very frequently the main spring of the Emperor's most important actions has its origin there. Consequently, the political conduct of Russia toward France, Prussia, and Great Britain, and more particularly the effects that conduct produces at St. James's, should, in my humble opinion, be explained from time to time to his Majesty's minister at Vienna, in order to furnish him the best and surest way to those Austrian secrets which are otherwise impenetrable.

I shall only add, that my feeble talents, to their utmost extent, are constantly at the disposal of my superiors; but that to render them of essential value or advantage, they must bear from your lordship's office the solid stamp and sanction of ministerial guidance, assistance, and support.

R. M. K.

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[No. 46.]

Vienna, April 30th, 1788.

My Lord,

M. Jacobi (for many years resident from Prussia at this Court) returned from Berlin on Monday, with very honourable marks of his sovereign's favour. He is raised to the rank of Baron, and will very soon present his credentials here as Electoral Envoy from Brandenbourg to the Imperial Court.

He brought me a confidential letter from Mr. Ewart, who informs me that he is already far advanced in framing new and very intimate engagements between our Court and that of Berlin. M. Jacobi has himself spoken still more affirmatively, by assuring me that a treaty of defensive alliance is on the point of being concluded between Great Britain and Prussia; the King his master having very recently removed the only obstacle which stood in the way, by agreeing that a war in the East Indies, in which any European power shall take part against England, is to be looked upon as a *casus fœderis*.

I own, my lord, that it is matter of infinite mortification to me to hear from a foreign minister what is the real system of politics which the Court I serve is preparing to embrace; and my surprise is the greater as your lordship's dispatch, No. 3, (which came to my hands only four weeks ago) gave me every reason to believe that the King's views and wishes were directed to a very different object.

Whilst I give vent to these painful feelings, I at the same time declare it to be my sincere opinion that after Great Britain has had so many proofs of the unfriendly disposition of Austria, and of the blind ingratitude of Russia towards her, an alliance with Prussia has every motive of sound policy, and every principle of wisdom, foresight, and self-defence to recommend it.

A complete change of system, in regard to German

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politics, has therefore become not only expedient, but indispensably necessary. But that it should have taken place in the King's councils without my Secretary of State's having ever given me the most distant intimation of such a decision, is what I cannot comprehend. I am bold to say (and I should not deserve the honour of serving the King as his minister at the first Court of Germany, if I refrained from saying it *loudly*) that such concealment is disgraceful to me in the position in which the King has placed me, and likewise highly prejudicial to his service. I must add, my lord, that I feel it to be so little consonant to the regard which I have an unquestionable right to expect from my official superior, that unless it be immediately repaired by confidential information and instructions, I shall (if they are denied to me) think I owe it to my personal character to make it my humble request to his Majesty to retire from a profession for which (under such treatment as I have lately experienced) I have the honest pride to declare myself totally unfit.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

[No. 55.]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, May 30th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I received by the messenger, Major, on Monday last, your lordship's dispatch, inclosing the *original* of my No. 46 to the office, and putting it into my power to withdraw that letter, or to resign my commission as his Majesty's minister at the Court of Vienna.

I trust that every circumstance of my past life, and every step of my public conduct will have fixed in the mind of my gracious sovereign the certain conviction

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that I am incapable of retracting a single word of what was written in the fulness of a heart whose feelings, and the exertions which they produced, have more than once been honoured with his Majesty's applause and approbation. My whole mind, with all its faculties, gave then, and gives at this moment, a cool and deliberate sanction to the expressions I employed in that letter; and it therefore only remains for me to thank your lordship for having (undoubtedly from candid and friendly motives) put it in my power to reconsider that letter, to confirm its contents, and by sending it back to the office, to renew my request that it may *remain in the official correspondence;* but in my *own precise words*, and not in those which a careless decypherer in the office has thought proper to *substitute in their room*. I have underlined with red ink all the cyphers in question, and the interpolations of which I so justly complain. I most cheerfully refer to your lordship's candour in judging, whether or not, in a moment when expressions were to be *weighed*, I might not have expected that the official subalterns would give to mine their true sense and value.

That no misconstruction may remain on record, I send inclosed a copy taken *verbatim* by my secretary, Mr. Stratton, from my letter-book, written in *my own hand*. That gentleman likewise certifies the minute correctness of his copy.

That the avowal of the sentiments and principles contained in that letter should, in any shape, expose me to incur the displeasure of government, is so far from entering into my comprehension, that I am in the sincere persuasion that the perusal of the following detail of the motives of my conduct will strengthen all my claims to the esteem of my sovereign, and to that of his confidential servants.

After serving his Majesty in Saxony, Denmark, and

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Vienna, for almost twenty years, and being honoured with the uninterrupted confidence and approbation of *ten* Secretaries of State, it was matter of equal surprise and concern to me, from the date of your lordship's of the 14th September, 1787, (which signified to me the King's high approbation of my ministerial conduct here) that my mission, and my personal concerns had all at once been judged, by your lordship, to be wholly undeserving of attention or regard. This became evident as not a line of answer was given to fifty successive public dispatches, nor to my earnest yet respectful representation of the situation of my private affairs, and of the well-founded claims of my secretary, Mr. Stratton, to a share in those favours, which his juniors in employment had, very deservedly, obtained from government.

Your lordship's answer to my fifty-third letter gave me to understand that my leave of absence would probably be granted, as my presence at Vienna was not necessary to his Majesty's service. In my answer to that official letter I thanked your lordship for having taken an early opportunity of laying before his Majesty my ingenuous remonstrance respecting the treatment I had experienced as a minister and as a man, and I expressed the most implicit reliance on the King's goodness and justice in forming a decisive opinion concerning every part of my conduct.

Soon after that period the Emperor's declaration of war against the Turks, rendered the scene at Vienna, extremely interesting. Yet, from the date of your lordship's dispatch above mentioned, I have received but one answer (relative to the business of my mission) to about forty of mine. I send annexed a copy of that answer, that it may be seen with what care *I myself* decyphered it, and that along with the promise of the most friendly attention to my personal concerns, it

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brought me, in the phrases which sum up, and conclude its purport, the following strong assurance in express words.

"No intelligence from Vienna could give his Majesty so much satisfaction, as to be convinced of the real friendship towards England existing in the Austrian councils; and a desire to return to that ancient system of harmony and good correspondence between the two powers, which would render them both secure in their present possessions, and inspire other powers with that degree of respect for them, which would make them the protectors of the general rights of Europe, and at once render the public tranquillity not only complete, but permanent."

With such an authority, and of so fresh a date, from my Secretary of State, I had an unquestionable right to conclude that my sovereign remained firm in the wish to seize the first opportunity of renewing that connection with the House of Austria, that had proved of so great advantage to Great Britain, and to this country.

Nevertheless, my lord, it did not escape me that a total change of system might become not only expedient, but necessary. I therefore said, in my enclosed letter, (and I repeat it,) that after so many proofs of the unfriendly disposition of Austria, and of the blind ingratitude of Russia towards England, an alliance with Prussia might have *every motive of sound policy, and every principle of wisdom, foresight, and self-defence to recommend it!*

But, my lord, I felt that I had no right whatever to forestal events, nor to deviate *in the least* from the spirit of the last orders sent to me. I remained in the firm conviction that *if ever* the King in his wisdom should see just grounds for departing from those political principles which he had invariably professed, and had (through his Secretaries of State, during my sixteen

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years' mission,) enjoined me to look upon as the strict rules of my conduct; his minister for foreign affairs could not fail to make an immediate change in my instructions, by a *few confidential lines*, and without giving me a larger share in the secrets of my royal master, than the good of his service absolutely demanded. Nothing more could have been required than such an act of common justice, and of state policy, to save me from the possible danger of *committing the King's name* by any ill-timed efforts of my zeal in prosecuting an object, which (though repeatedly recommended to me) could, even if attainable, be no longer embraced.

In this precise situation, and wholly in the dark with respect to the new politics of Great Britain, did I find myself, when I learned from undoubted authority that the Prussian ministry boasted of their being on the point of forming an alliance with England. Of this I acquainted your lordship, adding that I gave no sort of credit to an article of intelligence which *ran counter* to the very late instructions I had received from your lordship.

I have already said to what a pitch my astonishment and concern were raised in learning, on the 29th of April, not only from Mr. Ewart, that he was far advanced in framing new and very intimate engagements with Prussia; but from the mouth of M. Jacobi, the confidential minister of Brandenbourg, that a treaty of defensive alliance between England and his Court, was on the point of *being* concluded.

Amidst these feelings I did not hesitate a moment to write that letter which, in my opinion, stands in need of no other defence than this single consideration.

Every lawful wish respecting public business that a Secretary of State clearly expresses to his inferior, points out a precise object which that inferior is bound to pursue and forward with his best ability. Every such wish

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is in fact an order, and to obey it an indispensable duty. I am, to this hour, under explicit and reiterated orders to strive, as far as prudence, and a just respect for the dignity of my sovereign can allow, to rekindle in the mind of his Imperial Majesty, and of his ministers, the hearty wish of renewing a friendly connection and good understanding with Great Britain, and I am *empowered*, by your latest instructions, to assure them *in return*, that the King has that connection sincerely at heart.

But I beg it may be observed, that if through a sudden change of dispositions here, (which the national calamities of France, the growing difficulties of the Turkish war, and the suspicious tergiversations of Russia might very possibly have created) I had been able to succeed, and to have brought Austria to that very point at which professions of the King's friendship, and readiness to renew engagements with his Court, would have been well placed and warmly received, my sovereign and his ministry must, in that case, have been under the unavoidable necessity of *disowning me* and *my language*, though held *by authority*; as it is clear that England, whilst treating with Prussia, cannot connect herself with Austria.

Of all situations, my lord, that of a foreign minister wholly deprived of the confidence of his Court, and who is allowed, nay, even encouraged to proceed in a political pursuit which, in its complete success, could only lead him to disgrace and disavowal on the part of his master, is the meanest and most shameful. He alone, who silently submits to such treatment deserves the continuance of it; and I am certain that your lordship did not suspect me of tamely stooping to act so pitiful a part.

Here I rest my justification. My conscience tells me that I have fulfilled my duty to my king, to my country, to your lordship, and to myself. If, after these reasons have been weighed in the Cabinet, it shall still be expected that I should resign, I humbly lay at his Majesty's

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feet my resignation of that mission which he was graciously pleased to confer on me sixteen years ago, unasked, and under the very honourable denomination of the reward of past services.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

Four months—of considerable suspense no doubt to the writer of the above—elapsed before he again heard from the principal thus addressed. The following letter will show that, in the prospect of a journey to England, which many circumstances rendered so desirable to himself, he could express with equal firmness his sense of the claims of another.

[*By Mr. Stratton.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Vienna, July 27th, 1788.

MY LORD,

I received yesterday your lordship's dispatch containing his Majesty's commands for my return to England as soon as I *conveniently* can, and authorising me to present Mr. Stratton to Prince Kaunitz in the capacity of his Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires*, at this Court. But your lordship will permit me to explain, by Mr. Stratton (who goes to England on purpose), two circumstances which require a clear elucidation before it can be in his power or mine, to pay that full obedience to the King's commands, which we have each of us most sincerely at heart, to evince on every occasion.

I should do an injury to your lordship if I admitted a supposition that this order for my return home could be looked upon as a preliminary step to my final recal from a Court where I have resided sixteen years with a very large establishment, without a suitable opportunity of disposing of my valuable effects before I quitted

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Vienna. I presume that if such had been the intention of government, your lordship would have embraced the open and manly way of announcing my recal, and of sending me those official letters for the Emperor, which would have enabled me to put a becoming end to a mission which, I venture to affirm, has done credit to the Court I serve, and to the nation. Neither of these steps having been taken, I am forced to look for another motive for my being called home at present. Yet it is impossible for me to ascribe it to the existence of an idea that I can be induced to reconsider, or to recede from, those points of opinion and principle, upon which I have lately explained myself fully and irrevocably.

But, my lord, there stands in the way of a more prompt obedience to his Majesty's commands, another, and an insuperable obstacle, arising from Mr. Stratton's situation, and from his becoming principles. That gentleman has served me almost eight years, with great assiduity, and distinguished zeal and talents. He had acquired a claim to the attention of government, and a share of the public rewards attached to his profession, some years before either of the gentlemen who are his Majesty's Secretaries of Legation had dipped their pens in diplomatic ink. He thinks he has been hardly dealt with in seeing these gentlemen (however well entitled both he and I consider them to the King's favour) put over his head. He therefore judges it to be derogatory to his honour, and prejudicial to his reputation, to accept the office of *Chargé d'Affaires*, unless, as has been practised in the two last instances, at Berlin and Petersburgh, he be likewise honoured with the title of his Majesty's Secretary of Legation. He will explain his sentiments to your lordship, and will set out on his return to Vienna, the moment you are pleased to expedite him.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

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Representations so honourable to the good feeling of the writer, and so irrefragable in themselves as to be attended ultimately with the success they deserved, having proved ineffectual; the lapse of two months called forth the following characteristic letter:—

Vienna, September 27th, 1788.

My Lord,

I am sorry that the arrival of two mails from England, without a line from the office, lays me under the necessity of reminding your lordship that you have signified to me the King's commands for my immediate return to England; and yet leave me in the impossibility of obeying them, without betraying my public duty toward my sovereign and my country.

To leave the Court of Vienna without any person to transact the King's business (especially in a conjuncture so truly critical as the present) would infallibly be interpreted here as a suspension of all correspondence between the two Courts; and the consequences are self-evident.

Your lordship has called me home, and at the same time effectually shut the door against Mr. Stratton's entrance into his Majesty's service. I gave your lordship notice in my letter of 28th July, that he would not submit to dishonour; and he himself left the same declaration in your lordship's hands, *in writing*.

If I had a grain of malice in my disposition, I would set out for England to-morrow, and leave it to my official superior to get out of the dilemma the best way he could. But, my lord, I have it sincerely at heart to prove that I am a faithful servant of the Crown,* as well as a good-humoured man.

* That this was no mere assertion, the best proof is to be found in the detailed and luminous official communications which Sir Robert, (spite

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I therefore only put your lordship in mind of the situation in which you have placed me; and beg that by laying this letter *immediately before his Majesty*, you may exculpate me from all blame, if his personal commands are not obeyed with that promptitude which I have ever shown in fulfilling them.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

Though it was not perhaps in human nature that after so sharp a correspondence, some irritation (heightened, perhaps, in a naturally amiable mind, by a lurking sense of being in the wrong) should not prevail at head quarters; yet a less offensive mode of testifying it might perhaps have been selected, than that complained of in the ensuing letter. It was worth while, however, to have experienced the affront, to be enabled thus first to *feel*, and then thus to requite it.

Vienna, October 18th.

My Lord,

Although your lordship has not thought proper to give me any official notice relative to the person who is to take charge of his Majesty's affairs during my absence from this Court, it has, however, come to my knowledge (through Prince Kaunitz and Baron Jacobi), that your choice has fallen on a Mr. Hammond, who is coming hither for the purpose.

This mode of communication between a British Secretary of State and the King's servants at foreign Courts is *quite new*, and I wish your lordship joy on the invention.

As it is of consequence to me to *discover* when his Majesty's *Chargé d'Affaires* may be expected here, I

of every discouragement), continued to forward, during the course of this unpleasant altercation, to his principal.

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shall go to the Austrian minister this evening, to seek from him that information which you have unaccountably denied me; though, to my certain knowledge, two mails have been dispatched from Whitehall, since you communicated to the Austrian minister in London the appointment of Mr. Hammond.

As I take it for granted that this gentleman is already on the road, I shall defer my departure till I have had it in my power to give Mr. Hammond a kind reception; and by affording him every information and assistance, to convince him that I have nothing more sincerely at heart than to enable him to transact the King's business (till my return hither) with advantage to his Majesty's service, and honour to himself.

I have the honour to be, &c., &c.,

R. M. K.

The extent of this noble return of the most frank and generous courtesy, to a persevering course of petty concealment and unprovoked rudeness, will be gathered from the concluding letter of a correspondence, as foreign to the character, as it was repugnant to the habits of Sir R. Murray Keith.

Vienna, Oct. 22d, 1788.

My Lord,

Mr. Hammond delivered to me, on Sunday last, your lordship's dispatch, and expressed to me his regret that a slight indisposition on the road, has prevented his travelling more expeditiously.

It is with pleasure, I assure your lordship, that all I have seen of that gentleman, during the few days we have passed together, corresponds perfectly with the good opinion you entertain of him; and that his modest, ingenuous manners, joined to an intelligent and well cultivated understanding, give him a just title to general esteem, and to my personal regard.

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He will tell your lordship that I have not only given him the kindest reception, but that I apply myself assiduously to furnish him with every information, instruction, and assistance which can contribute to his success and honour in the commission which he is soon to fill. Every paper in my possession is at his disposal; he extracts or copies what he thinks proper; and I hope that in a few days he will have gained so just an idea of the general state of affairs here, and of the characters of the principal persons, that he will be able to walk alone in his professional career, without any danger of stumbling. I shall leave in his hands all the cyphers. I need not observe to your lordship, that in the situation in which I find myself, my correspondence with the office has become an indispensable companion of my visit to England.

On Monday I presented Mr. Hammond to Prince Kaunitz, and recommended him strongly to the favourable regard of that minister. I have paid all the usual visits with him, and have made him acquainted with the *corps diplomatique;* giving him useful lights respecting the characters of those members of it, with whom he is to live in intimacy, and from whom he may extract authentic information. My departure shall not be delayed one moment beyond what may be necessary to render Mr. Hammond's entrance on the duties of his commission as advantageous as possible.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

Sir. R. Murray Keith, who set out from Vienna as soon as the above benevolent purpose was accomplished,*

* That it was "accomplished," as regarded winning the confidence and even affection of his youthful deputy, is pleasingly manifested in his *first* letter (still extant, and beginning "*dear Sir Robert*"), in which he says, that on his presentation to the Emperor, he had concluded many inquiries as to Sir R. K—'s journey, by asking on what day he arrived

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arrived in London on the 17th November. It would appear that on the very next day, he sought and obtained a personal interview with his principal, the result of which it would be anticipating here to mention further, than that on the part of the superior, the withdrawal of the letter No. 46, was still made a *sine quâ non* of the resumption of office at Vienna; while on that of Sir Robert that step was still indignantly rejected, and the whole matter referred unreservedly to the King's decision after a personal audience.

This, the well-known circumstance of his Majesty's illness, for some time utterly precluded; nor was it till after four months of no doubt abundantly harassing suspense (when too, official discretion rendered all participation in his anxieties impossible,) that on the King's complete recovery, no steps being taken by the Foreign Secretary to accelerate the audience on which hung suspended the public and private fortunes of his attached and faithful servant, Sir Robert Keith thus betook himself to the *fountain head*.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. PITT.

Cork Street, March 26th, 1789.

SIR,

It is with great satisfaction, and firm reliance on your candour, that I submit to your judgment every step of my public conduct; which I trust has always

and on being told the 17th (the very day Sir R— had himself fixed before leaving), said he was not at all surprised, as it corresponded with his usual punctuality. "The Emperor did not fail to add" (says his young correspondent), "that he should be extremely happy to see you back again at Vienna."

And when he did return again to Vienna, it may be pleasing to learn, that his first dispatch contained unqualified encomiums on Mr. Hammond, and a request to keep him (though a supernumerary), till something else offered.

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appeared to be conformable to honourable principle and to warm and unshaken loyalty and attachment towards my sovereign.

After remaining here upwards of four months, without receiving any official communication from my principal, I have found myself under the necessity of writing to Lord Caermarthen, this day, the letter of which I take the liberty to enclose a copy.

I deferred troubling his lordship sooner with the renewal of my request, in the supposition that the pressure of official business, in the present crisis, might for some time prevent his attention from being turned to the private affairs of individuals. But a longer delay in my application might possibly be liable to misapprehension.

I have, therefore, endeavoured to unite in the language of it the decent and temperate assertion of my own just claims, together with the clearest proof of that deference, which I willingly show towards the character of my principal and the rights belonging to his official station.

I shall be extremely happy if this fair proceeding meets with your approbation; and completely so, if I have succeeded in proving to you, Sir, the heartfelt sentiments of respect and gratitude, with which I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE MARQUIS OF CAERMARTHEN.

Cork Street, March 20th, 1789.

MY LORD,

In our last conversation, of the 18th November, your lordship very frankly made known to me your determination to recall me from my mission to the Court of Vienna whenever you could obtain the royal sanction for that measure. This resolution you declared

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to be *final*, it therefore excluded all further discussion, and debarred my attendance at your office.

The only request I made to your lordship was, that in consideration of my long services, and shattered fortune, I might be honoured, as soon as possible, with your commands upon the matter; that I might not be left unnecessarily under the heavy load of a very large establishment at Vienna.

Your lordship acquiesced in the justice of this request, and promised to fulfil it. From that day to this I have remained in strict and respectful silence, in regard to the whole affair, leaving the issue of it entirely in your lordship's hands.

Ever since the most happy event of his Majesty's complete recovery took place, I have lived in anxious expectation of those commands; wishing to seize the earliest opportunity of laying at the feet of my sovereign the sincere expressions of my zealous duty and deep gratitude, and entertaining the most sanguine hope to find, in the breast of my beneficent master, and invariable benefactor, such a favourable interpretation of my past services and present conduct, as will prove the most invaluable reward to which I can ever aspire.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

That *immediate steps* were about to be taken for procuring the audience in question (which, as Sir Robert in a letter not given, himself observes, could *only* according to etiquette, take place through Lord Caermarthen, as his *official* principal), the following note of apology from the under secretary proves :—

"*Whitehall, March 25th*, 1789.

"Mr. Fraser presents his compliments to Sir Robert Murray Keith, and has the honour to acquaint him that the event of the death of the late Duke of Leeds

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(which happened early on Monday morning), has prevented the present Duke from receiving his Majesty's pleasure as to the time when the King may be pleased to receive Sir Robert."

As soon as filial duty and decency permitted a resumption of official business, no time seems to have been lost.

"*Whitehall, Wednesday, April 15th*, 1789.

"The Duke of Leeds presents his compliments to Sir Robert Murray Keith, and has the honour to inform him that the King will receive him at Windsor on Sunday next, at one o'clock."

"Sir Robert Keith presents his respectful compliments to the Duke of Leeds, together with his grateful acknowledgment for the honour his Grace has done him in the communication of his Majesty's command respecting his attendance at Windsor on Sunday next: they shall be obeyed with the utmost punctuality."

Of the particulars of the interview itself between the King and the faithful servant he had so long delighted to honour, no record (beyond the brief though satisfactory one contained in a letter shortly to be given, from Sir Robert to a diplomatic friend), has unfortunately been preserved. Its result, in addition to the triumph (never *once* made a subject of unseemly exultation, even in confidential correspondence), of confirmation in his post at Vienna, may be gathered from the following *studiously* polite and even friendly note (in his own hand) from the Duke, apologising for the postponement of a previously appointed meeting.

"*Whitehall, April 21st*, 1789.

"The Duke of Leeds presents his compliments to Sir Robert Keith, and is afraid it will be impossible for

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him to receive Sir Robert to-morrow (as proposed) on account of Mr. Hastings' trial, which is then to be proceeded in. The Duke will let Sir Robert know whenever he can fix a time, and is generally at the office about two o'clock, if not engaged at the House of Lords; and shall be happy to see Sir Robert at that time, any day after Thursday that may be convenient for him to call at Whitehall. If the Duke can possibly fix a time, with certainty of his being punctual to it, he will not fail to send word to Sir Robert.

"*Sir Robert Murray Keith, &c., &c., &c.*"

What passed in the interview between Sir R. M. Keith and his late principal, has also not transpired. But the cordiality with which the official correspondence was resumed on his return to Vienna, and the share we shall see him frankly assigning to his lately offended superior in forwarding his legitimate claims,* prove that the temporary estrangement had vanished on the renewal of personal intercourse. Let us hope that in writing a few days after, by his Majesty's direction, to "desire Sir R. M. Keith to attend at Windsor to be sworn of the Privy Council," his *quondam* friend once more experienced the feelings which had prompted him, two or three years before, thus to express himself upon the subject:—"It gave me concern you should be at the trouble of stating your former services as a ground for the favour in question. The King is too well convinced of your long-experienced zeal and ability, to have made any

* The intimacy of the parties, previous to the alienation (on public more than private grounds) of the neglected diplomatist may be gathered from the playful terms in which Lord Caermarthen alludes to a former claim of the kind. "Observing by your letter to North, that you are anxious to know *Sir George's* (the King's) sentiments and intentions towards you, I am happy to tell you that they are precisely what you wish. Believe me, you do justice in reposing faith and confidence in his *Clerk*, who will not leave off worrying the *Steward*, till justice is done you."

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recapitulation necessary; and I should be sorry indeed to have you suspect me (who was to convey your wishes to his Majesty) of being so totally ignorant of, or inattentive to your merit, as to think I could hesitate a moment in executing the commission. I immediately mentioned it to the King, and you may safely rely on your wish being gratified whenever your personal appearance can render it practicable. I do assure you with sincerity, I shall ever be happy in any opportunity which may enable me to oblige you."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. TREVOR.*

London, April 27th, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR,

At the moment that I received your most kind letter in last December, I felt the very essential obligation it conferred on me, and would have rejoiced in giving you the most immediate proof of my deep affection and gratitude for such a rare mark of disinterested friendship.

But (from considerations which I am sure would have met with your full approbation) I thought myself obliged not to depart, in any shape, from the strictest silence in regard to my personal and professional affairs, till I had obtained an audience of our beneficent sovereign.

I took, however, the earliest opportunity of conveying to you, my dear Sir, through Lady Hampden and Mrs. Trevor, my warmest thanks for those noble and delicate sentiments which did so much honour to your own goodness of heart, and made the most indelible impression on mine.

After remaining five months in a state of uncertainty

* Son to Lord Hampden, and his Majesty's minister at Turin.

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relative to my future destination in the diplomatical line, I had the happiness to be most graciously received by his Majesty on Sunday last, in a private audience, and to learn that he had *determined to continue to employ my services at Vienna.* I had yesterday the honour of receiving from the Duke of Leeds's mouth, verbal directions to the same effect, and I lose not a moment in making you acquainted with this final decision. The Secretary of State has informed me, that his Majesty has been graciously pleased to confer on me the title of Privy Councillor, and that I shall be sworn in the first time the Council meets. This circumstance alone delays my departure for Scotland, where I am preparing to make a short excursion previous to my return to Vienna, which will probably take place in the end of next month.

I mention all this to you, my dear Sir, because you have convinced me that no man alive takes a more hearty interest in what regards me than you do.

I sincerely hope that talents and principles such as yours are known to be, will soon have an ample scope, in a wider and agreeable field; and I give you my sacred word that wherever that field shall be situated, it shall be my pride, as well as pleasure, to repay your brotherly cordiality, in full measure, with that unalterterable attachment which you have so good a right to expect from,

My dear Sir,
Your most obliged and faithful friend,
R. M. K.

P.S.—Since writing the above, advice has been received here of the very dangerous state of the Emperor's health on the 16th instant; and I have the King's commands to return immediately to Vienna. I shall set out early next week, and travel pretty expeditiously.
R. M. K.

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One of the gleams of amendment with which the lingering, though fatal pulmonary malady of the Emperor Joseph was chequered, occasioned an extension of Sir R. M. Keith's leave, which he employed (as originally intended) in visiting his family in Scotland.

In August Sir R. M. Keith returned to town, on his way to resume his official duties at Vienna. Being desirous not only to return his personal acknowledgments to Mr. Pitt for that exertion of his influence which, joined to the steady friendship of his sovereign, had carried him triumphantly through a rather threatening official crisis—but (as he writes to their mutual friend, Mr. Dundas) to "be favoured by him with that confidential conversation, without which he should find it *next to impossible to render his services abroad of any essential utility to his country*"—the next day but one was fixed by the Premier for the interview; one it will be remembered which the veteran in politics had long looked forward to with the "able young minister," and which proved in the highest degree satisfactory to both.*

It was not long after Sir R. M. Keith's return to Vienna, that substantial proofs of the value put by the sovereign and his "young minister" on his services, called forth the following graceful acknowledgment:—

* Mr. Dundas, the friend of both, thus writes to Sir R. M. Keith:—"I am much pleased to learn that everything went so much to your wishes before you left Britain. The description you give of your conversation with Mr. Pitt is that which I could easily conceive from the parties concerned. The simplicity of his ideas on all political subjects is one of the characteristics of him, which I have always admired. I hope in God it will continue so, but at present there is no doubt the ball is at our feet; and I trust we shall be completely recovered from all our embarrassments before other nations can be in a condition to look us in the face. If I can be of any use to you in your absence you may freely command yours, with great regard,

H. DUNDAS."

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. PITT.

November 20th, 1789.

SIR,

I am extremely grateful for his Majesty's goodness in granting so handsome an addition to my salary; and well aware how much I am indebted to your patronage,* for the ease and comfort of my pecuniary situation.

I have only to wish for an occasion of rendering my zealous services more useful to my king and country; and whenever it may suit the views of government to afford me such an opportunity, it shall be improved to the utmost of my power. I have the honour to be, most gratefully and respectfully, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

One letter more remains (without which the moral picture of the man would be incomplete) that in which, with the real unaffected cordiality of a breast, incapable of harbouring the un-British feeling known by the exotic word *rancune*, Sir Robert gives to his principal, not only formal and official, but personal credit for the increase of emoluments alluded to above.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, Nov. 18th, 1789.

MY DEAR LORD,

I receive with deep gratitude, the fresh proofs of munificence with which our royal master has been

* It must have been with peculiar pleasure that this hereditary patronage was acknowledged by the writer. It will be recollected that not only was Lord Chatham the special patron of Mr. Keith, but also that Sir Robert's own early military command was *entirely and solely* due to him. In both cases too, the strong interest created was the result of a personal interview. No sooner did the young half-pay officer "get access to Mr. Pitt" (the elder), than his "business was done;" and so it was, when in advanced life, he gained admission to the son.

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graciously pleased to honour me; and I beg of your Grace to have the goodness to lay my humble and dutiful acknowledgments at his Majesty's feet.

I think myself essentially indebted to your Grace, for the warm interest you were pleased to take in my obtaining that additional allowance; and to Mr. Pitt, for having thus set my pecuniary affairs on an easy and comfortable footing. My only regret is, that I am not placed in a more active scene, where my zeal might become more useful to my king and country. I shall be happy if, when the restoration of the general tranquillity of Europe shall become an object of interesting negotiation, my mission here shall afford me an opportunity of exerting my best efforts to prove myself worthy of his Majesty's favour.

Mr. Hammond is extremely flattered by your Grace's kind remembrance of him. He is beloved and esteemed here, and is well persuaded of my hearty regard for him. Yet you would think him to blame if he did not ardently wish for some solid establishment, where his zealous services could have scope sufficient to justify your Grace's favourable opinion. I will pawn my word that Mr. Hammond will do credit to it in whatever situation you may be pleased to place him.* I have the honour to be, very gratefully and respectfully, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

It was indeed an anxious and melancholy, as well as troubled scene, to which Sir R. M. Keith was recalled, by the increasing illness of his twenty years' public patron, and private friend, the Emperor Joseph; a few affecting particulars of which are given in his letters of that period of affliction and disaster.

* It may appropriately close this somewhat lengthened personal history, to state, that Sir R. Keith brought back from London *full authority to present Mr. Stratton as Secretary of Legation.*

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He thus writes to his *sister* on the 23rd of January, 1790.

"This year begins in as turbulent a manner as the preceding one, and I hear of nothing but '*wars, and rumours of wars,*' on every side. Happy are you, my dear sisters, to live in a country where a hostile sword has not been drawn for almost fifty* years; and is hardly to be dreaded for twice as many years to come! I hope I am not mistaken in looking upon Scotland as one of the most flourishing countries in Europe; and, thank Heaven! your internal disputes are confined to election matters, and to those little squabbles respecting personal interests, which are in no danger of disturbing the national tranquillity. The Demon of Discord, in the meantime, has extended his influence throughout the greatest part of the Continent; and there are few countries on this side the sea, where either a foreign, or a domestic war is not already raging, or soon to be apprehended.

"Our winter here is uncommonly melancholy, owing to the declining state of the Emperor's health, and the sickness which a great number of officers of the first families have brought back with them from the unhealthy climate of the Lower Danube. Happily the brave Marshal Laudohn seems to have recovered his constitution by the fatigues and laurels of his campaign. He is now destined to command a *great* army, which is to assemble early in the spring, in Bohemia and Moravia, in order to ward off any blow which may be meditated against this monarchy by the Prussians and Poles. On what grounds the Austrians found these apprehensions, which they are at no pains to conceal, I really don't know; but everything is preparing here, as if a war with these powerful neighbours were almost inevitable.

* Alluding to the Rebellion in 1745.

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"The Turks talk much of the ardour of their young Sultan to make the third campaign of the war *in person;* but they are at the same moment, nibbling at a pacification; and I am one of those persons who believe that private intrigues in the Seraglio go farther in deciding all material questions in that empire, than the ablest reasonings of the most consummate politicians. Enough of my trade. The Emperor's malady grows, alas! every day more alarming; but as the spring advances, some hopes are entertained of the salutary effects of a more favourable season. My life, meantime, is very uniform, and a little *dowie;* * but I have health, competence, and contentment of mind, so that my lot is an enviable one. I have a favourite scheme for hiring a handsome and pleasant country house in the spring, and of planting my cabbages, I hope, more cheerily. My colony is extremely thin. Lord Thanet and General Hyde are the chief pillars of it. But I have my two trusty chums, Stratton and Hammond, who are excellent companions. I long for a plan of your *college,*† to which I will subscribe *when,* and *what* you please. Adieu, my best friends, I embrace you all cordially.

"R. M. K."

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

February 11th, 1790.

WHAT I have to tell you from hence, my dear Anne, is indeed very dismal! The Emperor is drawing very fast to the most melancholy catastrophe. The danger of a fatal explosion in his breast, is in the highest degree *imminent.* His physicians have given him notice of this; and there is no describing the calm composure with which he continues to transact almost the whole business

* Moping—melancholy.

† The Edinburgh University buildings.

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with his *own pen.* He receives two or three of his old chamberlains every evening in his apartment, and joins in the conversation, without mentioning his malady. He has given directions for many things in the event of his demise, and likewise for the christening of the child which the Archduchess will bring into the world at the end of this month. He has sent for his brother, the Grand Duke, from Florence, and he is expected in about ten days.

I am greatly afflicted at the sufferings of the monarch, and I will add that the enemies he may have can wish *no aggravation* to his present distress;—amidst a Turkish war, the near prospect of a quarrel with Prussia and Poland, the Netherlands lost, a general discontent among the lower classes of the people in many provinces, an incurable disease,—and, alas! no female hand near his pillow, to administer some comfort in every cup of those medicines he must take, though ever so inefficacious! His intentions were always good; though he was often mistaken, both in plan and method. He has given the best proofs of his hearty wish to correct former errors, by restoring to many of his subjects their ancient privileges. But enough of this affecting subject. He has been *kind, very kind* to me for twenty years. I write from *honest feelings,* but remember for the sisterhood, and their particular friends alone. I shall do so again as soon as the Imperial tragedy is concluded, and the curtain has fallen. Yours ever,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, February 13*th*, 1790.

My Lord,

I am very sorry to acquaint your Grace, that some alarming symptoms which have attended the

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Emperor's illness within these two days, induced his Imperial Majesty to fulfil this morning one of the most affecting duties of the Roman Catholic religion, by receiving the Sacrament in public. The principal officers of the Court, together with a considerable number of the nobility of both sexes, assisted at that solemn function, in the royal apartment; where it was performed in the most edifying manner.

It is hoped that the symptoms which prompted the Emperor's physicians to entreat his Imperial Majesty to fulfil the above-mentioned duty of religion without delay, may yet yield to the efficacy of the remedies employed; but a fainting fit in the course of last night, and the great difficulty of respiration which induced the Emperor to perform his devotions in public this morning, plainly indicate that he is now in the last stage of his malady; and it is even a matter of doubt, if his brother the Grand Duke (who is expected in eight or ten days) will find him alive.

In the meantime, the monarch has been extremely anxious to remove several of the principal sources of that unhappy misunderstanding, which has of late subsisted between him and the subjects of several of his hereditary states. The restitution of the privileges of the Hungarians, has been followed by a similar measure in regard to his subjects in the Tyrol, who were in a state of general ferment. I am likewise assured that his Imperial Majesty is determined to reinstate the countries of Gallicia and Lodomiria in the enjoyment of the rights which ought to have been secured to them by the stipulations of the treaty of partition. In short, I may venture to assure your Grace, that the Emperor is seriously bent on employing the remainder of his days, in recovering the hearts of his subjects as much as possible, by a repeal of many of those laws which, in the space of a few years, had in a great degree alienated

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them. To this plan of conduct, his Majesty is not only instigated by the sincere desire of correcting the errors of his government, but by the very urgent motive of employing the most effectual means to frustrate such hostile plans on the part of Russia, as were built on the growing disaffection of the Austrian subjects, both in Hungary and Poland. It is thought that the Grand Duke * will very heartily join in putting the finishing hand to all their salutary retractations. I am informed from good authority, that it is the Emperor's intention (ever since he sent the pressing invitation for this Prince's return to Vienna) to declare the Grand Duke Regent of all the hereditary dominions, at the moment of his arriving here.

I have the honour to be, &c.,
R. M. Keith.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, February 18th.

My Lord,

I must discharge a melancholy duty, in endeavouring to avail myself of the bye-post, to acquaint your Grace that between nine and ten o'clock last night, the Archduchess was delivered of a daughter; and I am very sorry to add that the consequence of the event proved so fatal to the Archduchess herself, that she died this morning about six o'clock. The new born infant is so weak that it was immediately christened, and its life is still thought to be in danger.

It may easily be conceived how great the shock occasioned by these complicated disasters has proved to the Emperor, whose health continues in the same very precarious state as for some days past.

* Afterwards the Emperor Leopold.

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Such an afflicting scene as will present itself to the Grand Duke of Tuscany * on his arrival at the Imperial Palace, can hardly be paralleled!

I have the honour to be,
R. M. KEITH.

P.S.—I am not sufficiently acquainted with the character of that Prince to venture any prediction respecting his future reign. But the valuable qualities on which his subjects place their chief reliance are his love of economy, good order, and justice. They believe him averse to war, and hope that his first endeavour will be the restoration of general tranquillity.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

February 20th, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTERS,

My letter of the 13th will have in a manner prepared you for the dismal catastrophe which has now taken place, after such a succession of disasters as has been most affecting, and can hardly be equalled. On Wednesday evening the young Archduchess (consort of the Archduke Francis) was brought to bed of a daughter, and the consequences of her childbirth proved so fatal, that she *died* next morning! The daughter is in a very precarious state of health.

The Emperor had been in imminent danger for more than a week. His sufferings were *incessant*, and he not only bore them with the most exemplary fortitude, but continued (at every possible interval) to employ his own pen with the utmost calmness, in directing the affairs of State and in taking leave of his friends and family.

* Father-in-law to the interesting deceased Princess, and brother to the Emperor.

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At five o'clock this morning he expired! peace to his shade, and impartial justice to his memory! His brother the Grand Duke (now King of Hungary) is hourly expected. What a shocking scene will present itself to his view on arriving in his new dominions!

I send this along with the government dispatches, by a servant of my own, to England. You will easily conceive how much I am hurried at such a crisis. I have only time to embrace the sisterhood with the utmost cordiality. I am well as you could wish me.

God bless you all,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, March 13*th*, 1790.

My two last letters were so melancholy, my dear Anne, that I am determined to talk no more about dead Princesses and Emperors, but to acquaint you that his Hungarian Majesty arrived *last night*, in perfect health, and that the sun shines uncommonly bright *this morning*. May it be the propitious omen of a sunshiny reign! There are excessively black clouds both in the south and north; let us hope that, with care and prudence, they may be prevented from bursting. The new-born Princess is getting quite well. The Queen and *twelve* more of her children (for she has fourteen in all) is expected here in May, and that will make the town lively. There is to be a coronation in Hungary, about July, and perhaps one in Bohemia. I am no lover of shows and crowds, but if precedent and fashion require my presence (which I rather doubt) it shall be forthcoming with a good grace. There never was so mild a winter, nor so promising a spring. I have secured a *charming* garden, with a very handsome well-furnished house, in the suburbs, where I hope to pass many pleasant and

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healthy days. It is only ten minutes drive from my town-house, and I intend to remove to it the first fortnight of April. The Pergens and Thuns are recovering from their depression; and all Vienna on the gaze to watch the auspicious dawning of the new reign. Their King is possessed of great talents, and is a lover of justice, and much reliance is placed on his pacific disposition.

Now, my dear Anne, having begun my letter as becomes a plenipo, let me come to my own great affair, as a quondam Edinburgh collegian. I approve entirely of the plan for my subscription, such as you and Dr. Robertson have arranged it, both with regard to the fifty guineas in acquittal of my beloved father's promise, and the fifty guineas more for myself. Let it be put in execution immediately; and close the transaction by delivering my hearty good wishes to Dr. Robertson for the speedy completion of the laudable undertaking. You do not tell me when the university buildings are to be begun; neither *will* you send me a scratch of the plan. Pray indulge me so far; I want to be *proud of it*, if I can. You wonder I never asked our brave old *compatriote*, Laudohn, to be a subscriber to it. Why, truly, because he is as poor a marshal as any Highlander of us all; and I could not put him in the dilemma of refusing to subscribe at all, or to the inconvenience of such a donation as he would think a becoming one. My reason, methinks, is good.

Tell the Duchess of Buccleugh that I acknowledge the justice of her wrath, and like her the better for it. But that her Grace may lay her account (and I say the same of the Duke), with finding me, in the evening of my life, a safe, a cheerful, and truly attached *crony*. I am laying in a precious stock of anecdotes and observations on all manner of great men, and great events, which, if properly and sparingly dealt out to

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you *all*, round a clear burning coal fire, will make you lick your lips again! The next six months will add considerably to them, else I am much mistaken! Tell me in return all that concerns the worthy folks with you. I love to *keep up the chain and brighten it carefully!*

I embrace you all with true affection,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, April 6th, 1790.

Good day to you, my dear sisters! I hope you are all hearty, and enjoying with comfort the blessings of good government and prosperity which reign in your *happy island*. More than one-half of the rest of Europe is seized with a *democratic lunacy;* and the country in which I reside is engaged in one war, and fears that a Prussian or Polish one will break out shortly. The new King of Hungary has the most humane and pacific disposition, and he is unquestionably doing his *utmost* to restore peace where it has been interrupted, and prevent the extension of the war. But it is extremely difficult to foresee what will be the result of his overtures at Berlin. An answer to them is expected in a few days, and we shall then be able to form an opinion with regard to futurity. King Leopold * has already gained the hearts of his subjects in this part of his monarchy by a voluntary offer (made at the moment of his accession) to restore to every province, and every rank of men, ALL their ancient rights and privileges. I have been this morning at Court, to assist at the ceremony (a very splendid one) of the states of Lower Austria, swearing allegiance, and doing homage to their sovereign.

* His election as Emperor had not yet taken place.

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It made the tears come into my eye to hear the loud and hearty shout with which that oath was pronounced, *aloud*, by the whole assembly.

This King will justify the opinion of his subjects, by the mild and equitable tenor of his internal government. He has, in a reign of twenty-five years in Tuscany, proved that he is a lover of justice, of good order, and tranquillity. Yet he must now carry on with great vigour (and does so) the most extensive military preparations on the side of Bohemia and Moravia, and at the same time, prosecute the war with the Turks. Marshal Laudohn is to set out in a week or two to take the command, but all hope of peace is not yet *wholly* lost. My poor late Emperor will soon be forgotten: his life was unfortunate, and his end melancholy; and his successor is certainly the most proper man alive to heal the wounds which Joseph's precipitance had made.

Count Pergen,* as Grand Marischal of this province, was the head man at the homage to-day; and his son Pepy (as Master of the Mint) presides at one of the great tables when the States dine at Court. The former is to retire from all his employments, with the esteem of his sovereign and his country. He retains the *whole emoluments* of his offices; which is a handsome recompense for his long services. He will now enjoy easy circumstances, and domestic comfort. I am just about removing to my *charming* garden. I assure you, my dear sisters, that, without losing a grain of my natural cheerfulness, I am growing very fond of a *snug habitation*; and feel a vocation to become a proficient in gardening! Let me once achieve some *important service* to my country (which the *pacification* may offer, after

* The husband of the Madame de Pergen, so constantly mentioned in the correspondence, as the most intimate friend of Sir R. M. Keith.

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all these princes are tired of quarrelling) and then you shall see me plant my cabbages with great glee, and some *skill*, within the precincts of your happy island! Adieu.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, May 8th, 1790.

I HAVE had a busy time of it, my dear sisters, for several weeks past, in employing my utmost efforts to give efficacy to our King's benevolent purpose of restoring the general tranquillity. I cannot hitherto boast of my success; but the commission is both *honourable* and *agreeable* in the highest degree; and, happen what may, I am sure that I shall have a good claim to the approbation of all parties.

The King of Hungary is indefatigable in restoring good order and general contentment throughout his extensive dominions. It is no easy matter, after all the confusion and discontent which the hasty measures of his late brother had created; but with perseverance, and that real benevolence which belong to his character, there can be no doubt of his attaining, some time hence, that desirable object. His Queen, and twelve young children will arrive here next week; this will enliven our good city of Vienna, which, in truth, stands in much need of it! I am to present my credentials to the new King to-morrow; after which I shall remove to my garden-house, which is near enough to be constantly at hand for every sort of business. I have also a letter from our King to her Hungarian Majesty, which I shall deliver on her arrival. I have seen that Queen here formerly; she is a very estimable, though by no means handsome, princess; and her large family has been brought up with sense and simplicity.

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The Diet of Hungary will be opened on the 6th of June, and it is supposed that in a month after, the restoration of the ancient constitution of that kingdom will be so far completed, to the satisfaction of sovereign and subjects, that the coronation will take place at Buda. The ambassadors will be invited: and I shall or shall not undertake that expensive and troublesome journey, according to the orders I shall receive from home. The election at Frankfort will be brought on in July; and if all goes on as smoothly as there is reason to believe, his Hungarian Majesty may receive the Imperial crown in September or October. I thank my stars that I have nothing to do at *that* stiff ceremony! All these fine shows will afford great entertainment to our fine folks, provided a new war in Germany can be prevented. If, unfortunately, the sword must still be drawn afresh, I fancy it will throw a great damp on each of these splendid assemblages.

The Hungarians are preparing to display an *old-fashioned*, but excessive magnificence in the dress and manners of their country. The Germans at Frankfort will launch into all the frippery and finery of the *quondam* French nation. The French, in the mean time, will be *cutting each other's throats* by way of amusement, and to prove that *Liberty is the best of all blessings!* They have bit the Brabanters and Flemings, who are aspiring to the glory of having *no government*, and three or four civil wars *at a time*. My dear Anne, this enlightened age of ours is exceedingly nonsensical; and it would seem that steady judgment, and sound principles have taken refuge in our happy island *alone*. Let us persist in this fair and sensible career; and England will have every reason to be proud of the part she acts in Europe!

What a superb letter this is, my dear sisters! and how becoming the pen of a sagacious plenipo! All

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Kings and Emperors, and deep politics! I am sure you are delighted with your brother for these two ponderous pages. But this shall descend to men and things, and treat of friends and cronies. Madame de Pergen is recovering from a long indisposition, and Marianne quite well—she and her husband *like* Denmark, which surprises *me!* They knew my friend Hammond here, and will receive him kindly at Copenhagen. My faithful chum, Stratton, is hearty and contented. He has *now* good heart, and ambition to go on in his profession. He is *a valuable young man*—tell his sisters so.

As for me, I am a cheerful, fresh old gentleman, and an assiduous negotiator. Where, and to what effect, you shall know *hereafter*. I am now trying to complete my claim to *otium cum dignitate* (you love latin) in the evening of life. God bless you, my dear friend, and send us a happy meeting!

I must tell you a singular anecdote about the ninth coronation in Hungary. The archives of that country have been rummaged up, to get everything cut and dry, for the ensuing ceremony; and the names of three *Scotch families* have been found, who have been naturalised in that kingdom, and have all the rights of Hungarian gentlemen! They are Gordon of Park, Coutts of Auchterfoul, and Danson of Danreith. If you meet with any of them, tell them they may appear with whiskers, and the Hungarian dress, at Buda in July, and will be received with *distinction*.

I shall be happy to receive your sketch of the new College. But tell me also how your new *town* progresses—Auld Reekie is my hobby, or rather New Reekie, for I *despise* the old one, and it is the *only* old thing I despise; for I love my old cronies, habits, and connexions better than ever. Yours, very heartily,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, July 8th, 1790.

I CONFESS, my dear sisters, that I have been, for the last two months, but a lame correspondent. I have tugged at my oar with might and main; and thought myself in a fair way of reaching the harbour. The business has, however, taken a different turn, and within these few weeks the political traffic has been removed to Reichenbach, in Silesia; where a considerable number of the plenipotentaries are now endeavouring to lay the groundwork of a general accommodation.

The disposition is conciliatory on all sides; but where so many jarring interests are to be reconciled (at least in a certain degree,) it is a difficult, and can hardly be a speedy negotiation. If once we get the preliminaries agreed on, and an *armistice* established, the horrors of a new war will be obviated; and all the matters of a secondary nature may be maturely weighed and discussed. The new King of Hungary has given proofs of his love of peace; and will make considerable sacrifices to obtain it. The state of confusion in which the late Emperor left his extensive monarchy, renders peace the most desirable of all objects to his successor. The Diet of Hungary is very turbulent, and no time can yet be fixed for the coronation; when a pacification shall become certain, matters will go on more smoothly in Hungary, and also at Frankfort, when the election will in that case be almost instantaneously decided. I am interrupted, as happens to me, three or four times every morning, and will return to you, my dear sisters, on *Saturday*.

July 10.

Matters are nearly in the same state, my dear Anne; but the hope of peace is *prevalent* everywhere, and I

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begin to think that the Spaniards (finding themselves disappointed in regard to French co-operation,) will soon bring down their spirit to relinquish the greatest part of their foolish pretensions.

As to *France*, the fever runs higher and higher! the course of it must end in civil war, *sooner or later*. This I hold to be an *infallible* prediction; and on its confirmation (notwithstanding a million of civic oaths,) I *stake all my political sagacity*. I am sorry to say that this French folly has proved contagious in *almost every corner of Europe*. But enough of these cloudy politics: let me talk to you of brighter things. We are to have fine matrimonial doings here in next September. The King and Queen of Naples are coming, with their two eldest daughters, who are to be married *forthwith* to our two eldest Archdukes. There is a third intermarriage equally settled between those royal families; that of the Prince Royal of Naples with our third Archduchess; but each of the parties being now only *thirteen* years of age, the nuptials are not to be celebrated for four or five years to come. The King and Queen of Hungary, with their *two* coronations and *two* marriages, will have their hands full of work between this and the winter. If the peace is made, their Sicilian Majesties have expressed a wish to be present at the Frankfort coronation, a show at which I have not the smallest wish to assist. All my social and convivial passions are (thank Heaven,) as strong as ever. But my taste for royal banquetings and princely junketings have left me long ago, and all my comforts are centered in *narrow circles*—my sisters and friends.

Yours ever,
R. M. K.

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[*Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Vienna, July 23rd, 1790.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I send one of my servants to-morrow to England, with the foundation of a peace in this part of the Continent, and I trust that the superstructure will be perfected in a short time, and to general satisfaction. This I tell to the *sisterhood alone*, and for their *private* information; with this additional circumstance, that if there be any real merit in preventing the extension of hostility, their crony Murrays-hall,* may honestly claim a great share in it. This is a truth no mortal can, or will deny.

I wish somebody (equally well informed) would assure me that our quarrel with Spain is in as fair a train of adjustment. I am in hopes that the case *is* such; for I never can figure to myself that Spain can be rash enough to risk a single combat with England; and the French, amidst all their madness, seem at least to have kept hold of one wise maxim, that of steering clear of all quarrels with foreign states. But there is no foretelling what turn the unaccountable politics of the National Assembly may hereafter take!

But I leave these matters to the explanation of futurity. I am, in the meantime, sincerely glad, that *Cousin Kitty*† has played her cards *womanfully* (there's a compliment for your sex) and brought her matters to bear so successfully. I am in a *monstrous* hurry, having a score of letters to write.

I am disappointed at finding that there is little

* The writer himself, so designated from his Scottish property.

† A confidential *cypher* name for Sir R. M. Keith, in his *family* correspondence.

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chance of seeing their Neapolitan Majesties here along with their daughters. It was their intention; but there seems to be no small apprehension that the French disease of *regeneration* may break out in Naples or Sicily; and therefore prudent sovereigns must not go too far *afield*. No contagion was ever more likely to diffuse itself than that of — "Down with the priests, the nobility, and all sorts of distinction." That the *mob* should bellow thus, is matter of no surprise. But that the nobility of France should supplicate for *degradation*, is inconceivable! I am glad (for amusement's sake) to have lived in the strangest, and most *topsy-turvy* of all ages. Since these things were to happen, I am glad to be an eye-witness of them.

What a grave and torpid nation we Britons are become! We have not a grain of that beautiful genius, which overturns all the maxims of government and state policy, which have led mankind in trammels for these five hundred years! *Basta!* if we are not a HAPPY nation, there exists not one in that predicament upon the face of God's earth!

But to return to my own pacification. The finishing hand will be put to it in a Congress, to be held, some six or eight weeks hence, in a Greek or Turkish town (Bucharest, or Crajova in Wallachia) at the distance of seven or eight hundred miles from home. However, as I believe that it will please our gracious sovereign to order your brother to crown the salutary work, pray be not surprised if the Gazette informs you that I am setting out for one or other of those outlandish cities.

R. M. K.

A few extremely valuable letters from the late Lord Auckland, on the politics of this eventful time, at whose centre circumstances had placed one of the acutest of

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observers, will come in appropriately, as a farther introduction to the Congress alluded to in Sir R. M. Keith's concluding letter.

The first thus opens, or rather renews the correspondence.

Lambeth Palace, Jan. 29th, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is a circumstance to which I look forward with great pleasure, amidst the new duties which I am about to undertake at the Hague, that I shall have frequent occasions of corresponding with you, and of renewing those old habits of intercourse and friendship with you, which have been long interrupted by the varied peregrinations of my life; but which I have ever recollected with a just and true sense of the value of your society and good opinion. I will write to you as soon as I arrive at the Hague; and I can venture to say that you will find me a punctual correspondent during my residence there; and sincerely desirous to receive and profit by your information and instruction; *et apparemment dans les circonstances actuelles, et eventuelles de l'Europe, il y aura abondamment de quoi s'entretenir.*

The day of my departure is not yet fixed, but the vessel which carries my baggage and part of my servants sailed this morning. My dislike to sea will induce me to go by Calais, Brussels, and Breda, and probably in about ten days.

I am, my dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

P. S.—We are happily in this country without news of any kind.

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[*Secret.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, March 19th, 1790.

You must pardon the hurry in which I write, under the circumstances of having a company to dinner, the individuals of which are new to me, and might not make due allowances for me if I were to keep them waiting, and I do not think it right to detain your messenger till the evening.

I arrived about eight or ten days ago. Mr. Fitzherbert leaves this place to-morrow morning. I am now settled here, and wish you most frankly to understand that I shall be happy to correspond and co-operate with you to the best of my ability. When I say little, or when long intervals elapse between my letters, attribute my silence to the true cause—the want of materials that may be new to you.

The sentiments of our government will best appear from the dispatches carried by this messenger. The King's ministers are, I think and trust, most unanimously and firmly of opinion that we ought to contribute to restoring to the Court of Vienna her revolted provinces; so far limited, however, as that their constitution and privileges shall be secured to them against any encroachment of their sovereign, by the guarantee of Great Britain and her allies. But circumstances do not allow us to proclaim decidedly this sentiment; nor are the provinces in question yet ripe for it.

As to the allies of Great Britain. The leading persons of this country give me, after full conference, ample assurance of their being at length satisfied that such a result of the business would give the best and most natural barrier between them and their French neighbours; and I venture to assert that they will act cordially with us, to the full extent of their means.

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[*Confidential.*]

As to his Prussian majesty, *c'est bien autre chose!* He has brought himself to acquiesce in our objections to declaring the independence; but I have the fullest evidence that nothing less than absolute and inevitable necessity will induce him to contribute by word or deed, to replacing the Netherlands under their old government. But besides, his treaty with the Porte commits him almost irrevocably to everything that can tend to increase the confusion of the world; and without any other provocation than the Count de Herzberg's desire to deprive Austria of Galicia and the Netherlands, and to give to Prussia, Thom and Dantzic, and an equivalent for Galicia from the Poles. And all this, at the expense and risk of other powers, who have neither interest nor the cause of justice to engage them in the enterprise.

I send you all the papers; but though *most sacredly secret,* I think it probable you will have ere now found means to get them. They only went two days ago to England, where I think they will meet with a very cool reception, as they do here. The answer to Mr. Ewart even went further, particularly as to an alliance with the Porte, Poland, and Sweden, *les parties honteuses de l'Europe.*

I passed two or three days at Brussels; and saw all the leaders of the different violent factions. But with all their detestation and rage respecting each other, they continue cordially to profess an abhorrence to any idea of recalling the House of Austria. My accounts from France continue (according to my construction of them) to show a continued progress to further confusions, and in the result, perhaps to a separation of the French provinces. 'Tis well you are a good *decypherer*;

In haste, most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

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[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, April 6th, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

Lauzun arrived here with the enclosed very important papers this morning; Basilico came with him, and brought dispatches of the same date, which I have forwarded to Berlin.

The letters to Berlin are of great detail, and written with remarkable force and perspicuity; and such as ought to have the effect which the King and his ministers wish to produce. It must be confessed, even by the most zealous friends of the Berlin Cabinet (and I am far from a lukewarm one) that the late circumstances which have taken place, are at least, exceptionable. In the first letter which I wrote to Mr. Ewart from this place, I expressed strong apprehensions that Monsieur de Herzberg was going much too fast for us to attempt to follow him; exclusive of the extreme danger of precipitating into an unprovoked war, and the indecency of taking as the ground and object of the war, the demand of the surrender of Galicia to the Poles, for an equivalent to be made good, either by the Turks or the Belgic states, or both; and an equivalent from the Poles to Prussia, for the trouble; and exclusive also of the utter unreasonableness of expecting England and the United Provinces to support these projects, to which they are not called by any sense either of interest, or of policy, or of justice. It is a wonderful circumstance, that the Court of Berlin should not feel that it is become the most pressing consideration with all sovereigns and all governments, to combine in restoring peace to mankind, for the sole purpose (if there were no other) of re-establishing the ancient ideas of order, and of civil

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and military subordination, all of which are shaken to their centre.

As far as I understand the purport of these dispatches to the different belligerent powers, (and I have had great pleasure in observing the origin of the plan, and its progress to maturity, among his Majesty's ministers,) it is the King's meaning, not merely to propose a general armistice, for the *purpose of a Congress*, to enter into a discussion upon the general grounds which are stated, "but also explicitly to offer his mediation;" and I take the liberty to intimate this, because, though it is not expressed in the dispatches addressed to you, it seems there to be implied. If the King of Hungary is *not tied hands and feet* to the Court of Petersburgh, he will accept this great proposition, which you are authorised to make to him, *bonnement et franchement;* and the Turks, upon your letters to Sir R. Ainslie, will do the same. I mean, as far as the armistice goes, and the appointment of plenipotentiaries to a Congress; with a request to the King to give his mediation, and also that of the States General, which I conceive would be right, both to add some degree of weight to the business, and from other obvious considerations.

My position is, that, if peace, or an armistice takes place among the northern nations; if the King of Prussia acquiesces in the earnest recommendation of the King; and if the Court of Vienna should then fairly and handsomely throw the arrangement of the Belgic Provinces upon the good faith of the King, and his allies; still maintaining the moderate and conciliatory language with which he has opened his reign; that the business might be accomplished, by our forcing the Brabant leaders, whoever they may be at the time, to send deputies to the Congress, to arrange the mode and terms of their return to their sovereign, or by such other expedients as the circumstances of the moment

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might render practicable. At the same time, it must be confessed that amidst the distractions, and violences, and treacheries which are prevailing in the civil and military factions of those provinces, the indisposition towards the Austrian government seems unabated.

We are also liable to be incessantly thwarted by the popular leaders in France, who, both from the distresses which they are multiplying, and the whole course of their conduct, are justly and emphatically called "*les enragés!*" Having laid aside all other religion, the French have now adopted the enthusiasm of giving what they call "Liberty" to all other nations; and, if that holy zeal is successful, all Europe will soon be in a worse state than under the old incursions of barbarous hordes. Adieu, my dear Sir, *Vous avez une belle besogne; dépêchez vous, je vous en prie.**

Believe me, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

The official correspondence of Sir Robert Murray Keith during the first sixteen years of his residence at Vienna, having been perused by, and freely drawn upon by Archdeacon Coxe, in his History of the House of Austria, the fifth volume of which is confessedly based on that correspondence, and on the previous one

* It will be pleasing to those who turn, as they shortly will, from those most able and acute, though hasty and unstudied suggestions of consummate political wisdom and experience, to find how completely they tallied with the opinions and conduct which Sir R. Murray Keith was simultaneously expressing, and pursuing at Vienna; as well as with the less creditable features here animadverted upon, in the conduct and character of other parties in the complicated negotiations of the times. The comfort which Sir R. M. Keith must have derived, from hearing his just and upright sentiments, and straightforward views in public affairs, thus confidentially reflected, from a congenial master mind, at a period of painful responsibility and anxiety, may better be imagined than described.

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of his father and predecessor, Mr. Keith, from the same court—it has been deemed superfluous to go over matter so voluminous, and referring to events already become the province of legitimate history; while transactions of a later period, still hovering on its confines, may be elucidated, and the character of the chief agents in them illustrated, by extracts from the same authentic and valuable documents, (chiefly unexamined until now by any historical writer) during the years 1790 and 1791.

The period was one of mighty and eventful changes in the long, carefully-balanced constitution of Europe. And though, in the revolutionary earthquake by whose throes the fondly-cherished equilibrium was first shaken, and then overthrown, the interest of events, deemed during their occurrence of first-rate importance, has likewise been swallowed up—it may be matter of curiosity to the rising politicians of times like our own, when the diplomacy as well as wars of former days are fast becoming subjects of tradition—to know how seriously statesmen viewed, and how sedulously negotiators watched over that "system," as it was called, of European alliances, which a convulsion, subversive of long established principles and ideas, was destined to sweep away.

Many considerations have concurred in recommending for selection, as a specimen of the public character and abilities (otherwise abundantly established) of the subject of the present pages, the "memorable" (as Coxe styles it) or "glorious" (as it is elsewhere designated) Treaty of Sistovo, in 1791. The prominent position then held, as plenipotentiary from Great Britain, by Sir Robert Murray Keith, stamps his record of this thorny and difficult, and hitherto inedited transaction, with peculiar value in a political point of view; while its singular locality, beyond the pale of Christendom, with its corresponding traits of Ottoman superstition

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and barbarism (features unique, it is believed, in the annals of European diplomacy) might invest it for the general reader with a charm rarely attendant on conferences and protocols, even had these not been relieved, and their whimsical concomitants chronicled from day to day, in a series of familiar letters, with which those of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, from *her* Turkish sojourn, can alone, perhaps, come into competition.

A further motive, were any wanting, would have decided the choice of this final act of Sir Robert Keith's long diplomatic career. Independently of the publicity elsewhere given to its previous transactions, the idea hitherto followed out in the present work, of giving chiefly such detached portions of correspondence as form a distinct whole—seems especially applicable when the object is to convey a just and precise idea of the public (as previous selections, it is hoped, may have done of the private) character of him who is its subject.

A negotiation for the restoration of peace to Europe, under the mediation of three of its most influential powers, in which we have the unimpeachable authority of one of the ablest among his brother diplomatists for stating that the representative of England "sustained the leading part;" * which, after unexampled obstacles, he succeeded in bringing to a triumphant termination, and with which it formed his anxious, and at length

* The whole paragraph, occurring in a letter from Lord Auckland (then minister at the Hague, and through whose hands the entire dispatches had been transmitted to London), is so honourable to his brother negotiator, that, though prematurely, perhaps, it may be given here. It is dated at the Hague, August 23rd, 1791.

"I felicitate you most sincerely on the final and complete success of the negotiation at Sistovo, in which you sustained the leading part with unexampled patience and perfect address; and at the same time with that dignity, weight, and effect, which it was your object to establish, for the credit of your mission, and to employ for the good purposes of that mission. The result was perfect, and perfectly executed." . . . .

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reluctantly granted desire, to conclude his long, toilsome, public career, seems the most appropriate memorial which even partiality itself could wish to perpetuate.

Lest, perhaps, undue importance should seem (not unnaturally) to be attached to a pacification, whose results, however laboriously accomplished, the tempest of revolutionary war soon well nigh effaced from the remembrance of mankind—it may be necessary to go back a little, and to quote the expressions of the historian of the reign of George the Third, regarding a state of Continental affairs in which England, distant as she was from their remote theatre, and unaffected as she might be presumed to be by the issue of the contest, thought it, nevertheless, equally for her dignity and interest to interpose her mediation.

On the critical state of Eastern Europe towards the latter end of the reign of Joseph the Second, and the menacing aspect of the storm which had raged there since the year 1787, on the general tranquillity, Adolphus* (adopting and abridging in a great measure the words of Coxe) thus expresses himself:—

"War was still waged between the Russians and Turks, and it seemed at one time to threaten a fearful extension, though its operations were finally limited to a few of the principal powers. Joseph the Second postponed his junction with Catherine to curb his own rebellious subjects in the Netherlands—a necessity to which he yielded with reluctance; but the temporary tranquillity enabled him to act with more freedom. He had affected the character of a mediator between the belligerents; but suddenly, and while this semblance was continued, marched two columns into the Turkish territory, where their situation was so helpless and

* Adolphus's History of the reign of George the Third, vol. iv. p. 311.

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exposed, that their preservation was entirely owing to the magnanimous forbearance of the enemy, who, instead of wreaking deserved vengeance on the heads of their unprincipled invaders, permitted them to repass the Save. The Grand Signor deprecated hostilities by a forcible and manly appeal to the justice and gratitude of the Emperor; but Joseph, eager to signalise his arms, and to share in the spoils of a fallen foe, published a declaration of war, in which he did not even attempt to varnish his aggression with the slightest colour of equity.

"In entering on this war, Joseph's ambition grasped at the recovery of Bosnia and Servia, the acquisition of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the extension of his boundaries to the Dneister. To forward these objects, he assembled an army greater than the House of Austria had ever brought into the field—a force of two hundred thousand men, with two thousand pieces of artillery. The Russians made equally formidable preparations; an army under Potemkin remained on the Bog, while others were judiciously stationed in various quarters, and an armament in the Black Sea was intended to favour the progress of Potemkin. After a vigorous siege, and in the depth of winter, the Prince took Ockzakow by storm, and subjected the inhabitants to all the cruelties and horrors attendant on such an event. This conquest cost Russia twenty thousand men, of whom five thousand perished in the final assault."

It was thus no insignificant or bloodless contest in which three of the most extensive Continental states were engaged; and though at various periods during its continuance, its operations were suspended by dangers from within or without, by which its ambitious aggressors, Catherine and Joseph, found themselves respectively menaced, yet, at every successive opportunity, a war "conducted," says Adolphus, "with prodigious fury and desolation, and in which, had hos-

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tilities between England and Spain not happily been averted, all Europe would have been involved," continued, notwithstanding the slow but sure approach of a mightier conqueror, to excite in the breast of the dying and *soi-disant* philanthropic Emperor, sentiments of bitterness and gratified revenge, whose sole excuse may perhaps be found in the utter prostration of his ambitious projects in every other point of his dominions.

In the campaign of 1789, the Turkish army amounting to 90,000 men, was not only defeated with immense loss, by the united Prussians and Austrians, under the celebrated Suwarrow, but the gallant Marshal Laudohn, by the siege and capture of Belgrade, and other victories, cast a gleam of joy and exultation over the last hours of Joseph, who, sinking as he was in the last stage of decline, rose from his bed to receive the news, and attend a Te Deum, in the cathedral of St. Stephen's.

"From successive conquests over the Turks by Prince Potemkin, Prince Cobourg, and Marshal Laudohn, during which, the allies became masters of the whole line of fortresses which covered the Turkish frontiers, the three grand armies, originally separated by a vast extent of country, were rapidly converging to the same point, and threatened, by their united force, to overthrow all opposition, and in another campaign to complete the subversion of the Ottoman empire in Europe."

To the havoc and bloodshed involved in such a contingency, a cessation of hostilities, necessitated by the circumstances of the belligerents, happily imposed a barrier; till the death of Joseph, by opening the way for the accession to the Imperial throne of a monarch of a more essentially pacific character, gave scope for the beneficent and disinterested interposition of Great Britain, to put a period to a war whose horrors, on the part of Russia especially, were an outrage on humanity, and Christendom.

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Strong, however, and in some respects well founded, as were the hopes held out by the previous moderation, and present professions of Leopold, of success in this desirable object, they were far from being immediately realised. "In the face" says Archdeacon Coxe, "of repeated protestations, that his only object was to second the efforts of Great Britain for the pacification of the contending powers, the new Emperor, anxious to push his success before the King of Prussia could take part in the contest, rejected" (or rather, as the following correspondence will show, eluded) "the armistice suggested by England, and redoubled his efforts for the prosecution of the war." "During the pause," continues the same writer, "which the approach of the two armies occasioned, the negotiation was resumed, and a convention signed on the 5th of August, 1790, at Reichenbach in Silesia; by which Leopold agreed to enter into an armistice with the Turks, and to open a negotiation for peace, under the mediation of the maritime powers, on the basis of the *statu quo*. A congress of plenipotentiaries from Austria, Turkey, and the mediating powers, (England, Prussia, and Holland), was soon afterwards assembled at Sistovo in Bulgaria; and all the subjects of contention seemed on the point of being arranged by an amicable compromise. The negotiation was several times impeded by disputes in various quarters, and in June, 1791, Leopold's plenipotentiaries, suspending the conferences, even retired to Bucharest.

"By a rare exercise, however, of temper, skill, and forbearance, on the part of the mediating ministers, the negotiation, which had proceeded so slowly at the commencement, was terminated with great rapidity; and the memorable Treaty of Sistovo, which restored peace, and suspended the rivalry between Austria and Prussia, was signed, on the 4th of August, 1791."

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Before entering on a negotiation, not only whose eventual success, but its very existence, depended on the personal character and sentiments of the new sovereign of Austria,* we shall have occasion to go back, and gather these from the spirited, and almost dramatic record of a conversation held by him, soon after his accession, with Sir Robert Murray Keith; and the latter's comments on them, and on the counteracting effects of the lingering influence of the celebrated Prince Kaunitz, long totally alienated from England.

The whole tenor of these despatches, in addition to the testimony borne by them to the acuteness and energy of their writer, is pervaded by that genuine, unfeigned solicitude for peace, which, from the most illustrious of soldier diplomatists, the Duke of Wellington downwards, seems to actuate every arbiter of human destinies to whom the horrors of war are personally familiar. It will be seen with what ardour and perseverance the preliminary step of an armistice, to stop the immediate effusion of blood, and compel a similar measure on the part of Russia, was pressed on the mild and pacific new monarch, at their first interview, by a veteran, whom not even his youthful triumphs under a hero whom he loved, could blind to the evils of warfare, or reconcile to the butcheries of Ockzakow and Belgrade.

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, May 11th, 1790.

My Lord,

On Sunday, the 9th inst., I had the honour to deliver to his Hungarian Majesty, † at a private audience, his Majesty's letter of condolence, and my

* Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had succeeded to his brother, the Emperor Joseph the Second.

† Leopold's election as Emperor had not taken place.

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new credentials. I accompanied these with suitable compliments, and in exact conformity to your Grace's instructions. They gave great pleasure to the King, who repaid them by assurances equally cordial and expressive.

His Majesty immediately entered into the politics of this critical juncture, by saying that he placed the most firm reliance on the friendly disposition, and salutary views of his Britannic Majesty. That he himself was in great hopes of owing to the King *the greatest of obligations* in the restoration of general tranquillity. That England was at this moment, from the character of her sovereign, the wisdom of his administration, and the national weight and force, the only power which *could render that service to mankind;* and that it would stamp a lasting honour on the British name. That he had seen with much satisfaction the very seasonable intervention of England, in the prospect of an immediate armistice, which he had ascribed to its true motive, that of endeavouring to prevent the effect of a very alarming and offensive treaty, concluded between Prussia and the Porte, the principles and terms of which could in no manner suit either with the upright sentiments, or the pacific dispositions of the Court of England.

That it had been matter of sincere regret to him not to have had it in his power to accept the armistice immediately. I here begged leave to observe that my Court must have seen with great concern the unlooked-for obstacle which had prevented that acceptance. But as every party in the present war, who had a sincere inclination to put a speedy end to it, must acknowledge the urgent expediency of adopting that measure without delay, I trusted that the Empress of Russia would have immediately joined her hearty consent to that which his Majesty had already declared it to be his own sincere and settled purpose to grant.

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The King replied that he had opened himself very frankly to Russia, in demonstrating the expediency of putting an end to a war of which he was himself heartily tired. That Russia was in fact not less so. That the Turks were exhausted, and could in no way promise themselves more advantages, even from the improbable success of a third campaign, than from the terms of peace which both Courts were ready to grant them.

Upon my pressing the King very much to give me the assurance that he had employed *all his weight* with the Empress of Russia to bring that princess to consent, without a moment's delay, to a joint or separate armistice, he replied in very positive terms, that he had not only made use of ministerial communications, but had written with his own hand to the Empress of Russia, to evince the sound policy of accepting the King of England's proposition, and that he entertained not the smallest doubt of her embracing it very readily.

I observed that when that measure shall have been adopted, and the field laid open for calm negotiation, I saw every reason to hope that from the dispositions which his Hungarian Majesty so frankly professed, and which, from every prudential motive, I must likewise suppose to exist in the mind of his ally, peace might still be re-established.

"Yes, Sir," said the monarch, "but the great point is that the efficacy of your sovereign's intervention should be felt in time to prevent hostilities. Should these unhappily take place, the scene would be wholly altered. You know how difficult it is to sheathe the sword when once it has drawn blood. We have but very little time left, for my latest letters give me reason to apprehend that his Prussian Majesty who, at first, seemed to have fixed the end of May for the commencement of his

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measures of aggression, has it now in contemplation to forestal that period."*

I recurred to the mention of the additional motive which such a supposition furnished for the immediate determination of Austria and *Russia* to close with my sovereign's proposal; representing that the King's good offices would, in all likelihood, prove of great cogency *everywhere*.

"I agree with you on that point," replied his Hungarian Majesty, "and I will fairly own to you that if once an opening could be obtained for deliberate discussion of all these matters, I see no real obstacle to our coming, all of us, to a thoroughly good understanding. I will not talk to you," continued his Majesty, "as if already actually negotiating; but I am not sorry to throw out some of my ideas, in a loose way, to show you what I think may be the means of effectuating an agreement.

"First of all, let me put Galicia entirely out of the question, as the restitution of that province is neither consistent with honour, with prudence, or with justice. I will not ask of you, Sir, to answer me on that head; as I am fully persuaded that your Court has not the smallest hand in that project, and is very far from approving it. With regard to all the rest, I shall readily agree to avoid the mention of any diplomatic phrases, which might impede the commencement of a treaty, in the prosecution of which, I wish to make known my hearty desire to maintain the general *equilibre*, and satisfy all parties in a reasonable manner.

"First, then, the Turks should be replaced in such a state as would render them respectable, though not formidable to their neighbours. They ought not to get

* Leopold's object was to induce Sir R. Keith to interpose with Prussia without waiting for the armistice, which he required the *permission* of Russia to grant.

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back all they have lost, because, strengthened as they will henceforward be by an alliance with Prussia, they might be tempted, some little time hence, to suppose that there would be no great danger in the renewal of war, since after three unfortunate campaigns, they had found themselves no losers by it.

"As to myself, I tell you frankly, it is not conquest or acquisition I have in view, but to establish for my dominions a proper and distinct frontier, marked out by nature, and which may obviate all future quarrels with the Turks, whom my predecessors found to be good neighbours, and whom I hope to find such in time coming. Nay, I will add, that I would rather have the Turks in my neighbourhood than anything else excepting the sea, which you Englishmen understand to be the safest, and most convenient of all neighbours.

"With regard to Prussia," pursued his Majesty, "it would seem that the monarch has it exceedingly at heart to make the acquisition of Dantzic and Thorn, and I will suppose that those cities may be of signal advantage to him, and that they are not of such consequence to Poland as to prevent me indulging that wish, provided she obtains some sort of compensation. But I can see no reason why that compensation should be sought at my expense."

After suggesting an arrangement by which this latter alternative might be avoided, the King thus proceeded:—

"By the stipulations I have here mentioned, or something nearly approaching to them, I am persuaded a pacification might soon be completed. You will easily conceive," added the King, "that what I have thrown out is merely the rough, and even random outline, of what I call the means of conciliation; it may be improved or dilated with very little trouble.

"There is but one subject," continued his Majesty,

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"upon which I have not touched, and indeed it is a very delicate one; I mean the Low Countries. I do ample justice to the views of the maritime powers, and am convinced that they see clearly what are their own interests as well as mine, in regard to the future fate of that country. But let us now suppose that the King of Prussia declares war against me. His first step would probably be to acknowledge the independence of the Netherlands. The stake is much too great for me not to strain every nerve to recover those provinces. Such a contest could not fail to be long and bloody. Should my arms prove successful, England is already apprised of my unalterable resolution, and she is, I dare say, well satisfied with them. But should the contrary happen, to what straits might not the head of the House of Austria be driven? I shall mention only one, which I give you my word, is the farthest from my intentions, the most repugnant to my interests, and a last and desperate resource, which *dire necessity* alone could in any shape justify—I mean that of tempting France, by the cession to her of a considerable part of those provinces, to take arms in favour of Austria, and to assist her in recovering the remainder. I repeat," continued the King, laughing, "that is only looking at the blackest side of a possible turn of fortune against me; for Heaven knows, that I neither expect nor wish for the interference of France on that side. I am talking of events which a long and unfortunate war might produce; but I return with pleasure to the prospect of a speedy adjustment, through the *wise and kind intervention of England.*"

I replied that even the most distant idea of departing in any exigence whatever, from the stipulated *indivisibility* of the Austrian Netherlands could never be looked upon by the maritime powers as *possible*. "But Sir," said I, "it is evident that the only wise measure

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to be embraced at present is an *armistice*—an armistice," added I, repeating the word three or four times with great earnestness, "without any longer hesitation."

"Yes," resumed the King, "and frank and fair dealing afterwards on *all sides*, under the mediation of *your sovereign*. I wish your messenger were again returned from England; pray give me early notice when he arrives."

"That I shall unquestionably do," replied I, "but your Majesty knows what sort of a vexatious scuffle I have to encounter, each time I have any overture to make through your prime minister. It is hard always to find a point of resistance on the threshold of your palace."

"I own it," said the King smiling, "and I am truly sorry for it. But you know so well how to manage matters, that I desire you only to take your own way. Tell Cobenzel, tell *me*, what you wish to make known, and you shall have no reason to complain. I am glad to talk to you *confidentially*, as I have always done complete justice to your personal character, and to your zeal for your master's service. I wish for peace very ardently: *he alone can give it to all Europe;* and I promise you that when I am again in possession of that blessing, I mean to keep fast hold of it, and strive most strenuously to render it as lasting as my own existence."

I looked upon this last phrase as announcing the end of my audience. I therefore hastened to enforce my former arguments, respecting the importance and urgent expediency of the armistice; to which opinion his Majesty assented very readily; and then put an end to the interview in such a manner as to convince me that what had passed in it, left an agreeable impression on the monarch's mind.

Such, my lord, is the precise detail of an interesting

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conversation, in which I have purposely suppressed, as superfluous, many of the observations I thought it my duty to make; but I have been particularly careful to adhere very strictly to the letter as well as spirit of every expression which his Hungarian Majesty used, even to the repetitions which naturally occurred in a very animated conversation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

The expedient devised and carried into execution, for obviating the ill effects of the impracticability (above alluded to, under the title of a "vexatious scuffle") on the part of the Austrian prime minister, is in itself so amusing, and the dispatch in which it is communicated so extremely characteristic of the diametrically opposite and straightforward mode of doing business of the writer, that it must be given at length, notwithstanding some of its most striking phrases having been (in the concluding pages of his History of Austria,) already quoted by Archdeacon Coxe.

SIR ROBERT MURRAY KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Vienna, May 24th, 1790.

MY LORD,

On the same day that I had the conference with Prince Kaunitz, on the subject of the proposal of a separate armistice, I called on the Vice-Chancellor, Count Cobenzel, with a view to convey through him to his sovereign, the knowledge of Prince Kaunitz's very unaccountable behaviour, and the more than cold reception that minister had thought proper to give to the most friendly overtures from my Court.

On the first mention of the matter to the Vice-Chancellor, I found him in a very different disposition from

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that of his principal. He told me, in very obliging terms, that although he had not seen my note, which Prince Kaunitz had kept in his own closet, and was alone employed in drawing up the answer to it—he knew from the King* himself, that my royal master's proposal had given him very great satisfaction: that he (the King) looked upon it as a real obligation which he was happy to acknowledge. To this Count Cobenzel added that the answer, which I might probably receive in a couple of days, would be every way satisfactory, and such as my Court had a right to expect. He then paid me many compliments on my personal conduct, and steady good temper in business. To this I replied, that I had ever laid it down as a maxim, not to allow private passion to prove detrimental to public business; that I had fulfilled my duty in representing to my Court the behaviour and language of Prince Kaunitz in their true colours; but that I rejoiced in the hope of finding his Hungarian Majesty's statements widely different from those of his prime minister, for whose incurable failings I felt commiseration: but that I hoped the King of Hungary would not *at this time*, allow his prime minister to spoil his salutary work by a harsh or captious method of conducting it. Count Cobenzel expressed a firm belief that every risk of this nature would be carefully obviated on the present occasion.

I then spoke to him of the ambitious and intolerable spirit of their Russian ally, and particularly of the haughty, as well as unwarrantable pretensions of Prince Potemkin, which, unless immediately abandoned, must prove an inevitable bar in the way of a general pacification. The Vice-Chancellor assured me that Prince Potemkin's claims had never been seriously listened

* It will be remembered that the Emperor was as yet only King of Hungary.

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to here, and that certainly Count Woronzow must have acquainted my Court that the Empress of Russia had entirely laid aside all thoughts of such a scheme, and would show the utmost moderation in the terms of pacification.

I told him that the word "*moderation,*" coming from the Court of St. Petersburgh, had always appeared to me a very vague expression; but that it was undoubtedly the interest of Austria to oblige her ally in this instance to *bring back* that expression to its true meaning, and to prove by *facts,* the precise value of what had hitherto been regarded by foreign powers as words of very doubtful import.

Some company, at this moment of our conversation, coming into the room, I made haste to conclude it with this observation. "The first step of your sovereign's reign was to set on foot at Constantinople the proposition of a separate armistice with the Porte. It is now offered to him by the most upright and humane Court in Europe, the one I have the honour to serve; and his ready acceptance of it will be of a piece with his first and fundamental principles in politics." Count Cobenzel said, "I agree with you entirely; but the conclusion of a treaty, *offensive in the strongest sense,* between Prussia and the Porte, makes a great alteration." "It does," replied I, "for it renders it more difficult than formerly to obtain the *Porte's* consent to such an armistice. But with regard to his Hungarian Majesty, it adds a tenfold motive for his thanking, and fulfilling the desire of that Power which offers so handsomely, to recommend that armistice at Constantinople." Here our conversation ended. I am to see Count Cobenzel again in a day or two.

I have already transmitted to your Grace the particulars of a conference I had with Kaunitz on the 23rd instant, in which the haughty inflexibility of that

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minister's character was even more conspicuous than on any former occasion.

In consequence of the last of Count Cobenzel's notes (copies of which are annexed), I had a conversation with the Austrian Vice-Chancellor, of which the following are the principal details. Count Cobenzel, after hearing attentively what had passed in my conference with the Prince, said, with great openness, "I thank you for this visit; I had requested it of you *at the desire of my sovereign.* I was afraid of Prince Kaunitz's haughty manner and inflexible demeanour; and am therefore directed by the King himself to soften and explain whatever may have hurt you, either in the Prince's language, or in the *note verbale* which he has put into your hands. I declare to you, in the frankest terms, that my sovereign wishes sincerely for peace, and is most anxious to embrace (in as far as his engagements with Russia will permit) the very kind and beneficent proposition brought forward by your Court. You know," continued he, "all the foibles of Prince Kaunitz; and you are too considerate not to have a great deal of indulgence for a man of *eighty* years of age, whose faculties begin to sink under the load of those years, and whose temper grows every day more and more intractable. Let us draw a veil over his weaknesses, and let you and I (who are the servants of a monarch who heartily desires peace) endeavour to give a different turn to all this business."

I replied that his Hungarian Majesty, who could not be ignorant of the glaring foibles of the Prince, must undoubtedly feel how dangerous it was to have his intentions thwarted, and his views misrepresented by the pen of his prime minister. That, in my opinion, the conduct and language of Prince Kaunitz was calculated to create wars, if none such had been impending, and that as foreign Courts could alone form their

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judgment of the sentiments of the Court of Vienna, from the communications given in *writing* by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I must take the liberty to observe that my Court could not fail to conclude, from the paper I held in my hand, that the King of Hungary rejected the King's proposition, and had no inclination to prevent the extension of hostilities.

He said with the utmost earnestness, "Your remark is perfectly just; but let us try, nevertheless, every means of avoiding this painful dilemma, and proving the sincere solicitude of my Court to meet with due gratitude the friendly overtures of the King of England." He then launched out into a long and, indeed, very candid explanation of every passage in the *reponse verbale* which has a doubtful or an improper meaning. This brought on a conversation of more than an hour, in which Cobenzel employed his utmost eloquence to convince me, that in the mind of his Hungarian Majesty every sentiment reigned which the King of England wished to strengthen, and that the answer of Prince Kaunitz was *not* that of his royal master.

"In that case," resumed I, "take back this paper, and give me the real answer on which my Court can rely." "That, alas! cannot be done," rejoined he, "but any other mode of explanation which you shall think proper to suggest, will, I dare say, be adopted." "Sir," answered I, "whatever is said to me by the Vice-Chancellor cannot *invalidate* this paper; neither can I take it upon me to set your words in direct opposition to Prince Kaunitz's, in order to contradict *flatly* what he has given me in writing. But as I am happy to have it in my power to transmit the King of Hungary's sentiments as nearly as I can in his own words, if you, Sir, will see your sovereign between this time and to-morrow afternoon, and procure *his* authority to hold to me, at another conference, a *clear and decisive*

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language in respect to the immediate acceptance or refusal of a *separate armistice*, I will (for the advancement of so salutary a work) write down in your presence every word which you shall be commissioned to pronounce; and (as you dare not yourself give me the same in your *own* handwriting) it shall go to England in *mine*."

He agreed readily to this proposal, and proceeded to press me strongly to send a messenger to Constantinople, though he owned he was sorry to repeat that his sovereign was certainly *not* at liberty to embrace a separate armistice without the previous consent of the Empress of Russia.

"This last circumstance destroys all," (resumed I,) "as my orders, of which you have a literal translation in my note, are positive and peremptory. I cannot send a messenger to the Porte, unless his Hungarian Majesty declares formally, that he is willing to adopt that measure *at all events*; and that, though he may not be able to give a written promise to that effect till he has given notice to the Empress, he has taken the unalterable resolution to agree to the armistice, even if that Princess should withhold her consent."

Count Cobenzel, not content with assuring me that his master's hands were absolutely *tied* on that point, begged of me to go with him into the next room, where the Aulic Councillor Spielman sat at his writing-table. This gentleman is the confidential secretary, whose weight with his sovereign is deservedly *very great*. Here the Vice-Chancellor recapitulated a great part of the conversation, asking Monsieur Spielman what he thought of the King's engagements with Russia? This gentleman replied, "They are absolute; and he cannot, without betraying them, consent to any separate measure."

In the end of the conversation, the Vice-Chancellor mentioned that their next reply to the Court of Berlin would be conceived in such fair, and truly pacific terms,

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that unless his Prussian Majesty was resolved to draw the sword at all events, he must be satisfied with their offers.

"Gentlemen," said I, "allow me one more observation at parting, and you have my permission to convey it to his Hungarian Majesty. Let the terms you are to propose to Prussia be what they may, let your sovereign deliver *his* sentiments in pure and sterling *gold*. If Prince Kaunitz's pen must be employed to clothe them in words, they will become *lead*, or something more detrimental still.* What a bad thing would it be for Europe, if, in the great question of peace or war, the caprice of every individual should create, and justify hostilities, when sincere conciliation was intended."

According to the appointment with Count Cobenzel, I went to his office this day, at two o'clock. He was *with the King*, and a servant had orders to tell me that he would give me notice whenever he returned. About

* Lest it should be imagined that any degree of personal pique had a share in this strong expression, it may be well to quote the words of the private MS. journal of a deceased traveller of great ability and experience:—

"I dined yesterday at Prince Kaunitz's, as I generally do once a week. Sir Robert Keith dined there likewise; and I had an opportunity of being personally convinced of what I had often heard, I mean the *great attention* the Prince shows him. There were several people of higher rank than he present; but the Prince took no more notice of them than he did of their *footmen*, and addressed his whole discourse to Sir Robert. The conversation, which at this table is generally the most trifling and frivolous imaginable, was both instructive and entertaining: for Prince Kaunitz, who speaks better than almost any man I ever heard, was obliged, by the questions that Sir Robert put to him, to talk upon interesting subjects. There cannot be a stronger proof of the great effect of *personal character* than to see Sir Robert, who is only an Envoy, more respected by the Emperor and all his ministers than the ambassadors extraordinary of Russia, France, and Spain, *put all together*. I by no means think Prince K. in the right for showing so marked a preference to any man, however much he may think him superior to the rest of the company; but this Prince despises the ordinary forms of politeness; and the Emperor himself, when he has any business to transact, is *obliged to go to his house, as he never comes to Court*."

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an hour after, Count Cobenzel prevented my visit by coming to *my* house, and after paying me (as he said, by order of his sovereign), the most flattering compliments on my personal conduct, and fairness of proceeding, he took out a paper, which he showed me, with several interlineations, and said, "This, Sir, is what the King has ordered me to say, and to allow you to commit to writing, for the information of your Court." He then read, and I copied word for word, the inclosed note. Whatever are its merits or faults, they must stand on their own bottom. I signed my note in his presence, and that business was over.

"Now, Sir," said I, "you have, with the consent of your sovereign, agreed to set aside Prince Kaunitz. Have you thought of what will happen if he sends me a letter this evening for Count Revitsky? Your minister in London will reason and act from Prince Kaunitz's orders; my Court will judge of his Hungarian Majesty's sentiments from your supplementary explanation. Nay, more, Sir, in the future correspondence of Count Revitzky, it is next to impossible that Prince Kaunitz should not remark that my Court acts on other principles than those his pen lays down. It is not *my* business to point out to you, Count Cobenzel, how you are to prevent such a collision; yet it is a subject deserving of consideration."

"Sir," replied the Count, "I thank you for the suggestion; it is a fair and candid one, and I will answer it fairly; *your* Court will have the consideration for *mine* not to let out our *secret*. You are requested by the King of Hungary, to follow the usual mode of communication through Prince Kaunitz; but to put into my hands his answers, whatever they are, and to wait till I give you a particular explanation from the mouth of my sovereign, of whatever may be harsh or ambiguous in those answers."

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"It is, at best," rejoined I, "but an awkward method of doing business, and the sooner an end is put to it the better. But I subscribe to it for the present, and can only say that no bad use shall be made of the confidence which his Hungarian Majesty reposes in me. I shall go on, for form's sake, with Prince Kaunitz as long as I can. But what am I to do with the letter he will send to me this evening?"

"Pray send it back to *me*," said the Vice-Chancellor, "and I will send you *another*, which shall contain a copy of what you have now written down from my mouth."

"Very well," replied I; "Prince Kaunitz began by excluding me from his share of this negotiation; it is odd enough that I should pursue it by excluding him!" (Here, my lord, ends the history of Prince Kaunitz's political career. Heaven forbid that I should hereafter ever insult his ashes!*)

I would not let Count Cobenzel depart without making one essential remark, viz.: "My Court has been anxious to obtain the certainty that no aggression, or even enticement to hostility shall take place on your part towards Prussia. To this I have answered that you neither have, nor can have a thought of taking any step which can bear the most distant approach to it. But, Sir, what are you doing on the side of Turkey? you are going to pass the Danube, and besiege Widdin. What will the King of Prussia say to your thirst of conquest, and the progress of your arms on that side?"

"Say," rejoined Count Cobenzel, "what I declare to

* That these were not empty words of course, is proved by a passage in a *private* letter of the same date to Lord Auckland, inclosing the above dispatch.

"I hope that future events will prove that I have gained a great deal by setting aside Prince Kaunitz's vexatious intervention. But one thing I must *beg* of your lordship, which is, that his humiliating situation at present may be kept *secret*, out of a just consideration for an old and once able and faithful servant of the House of Austria."

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you to be true, that no conquests we can make are in the view of retaining them, but only to force the Turks to a speedy peace."

"That is well," answered I, "but write this to Count Revitzky, and let him declare it *formally;* and, when you have done so, there remains another great question to be resolved. Do your Russian allies think as you do?"

"I declare, upon my word," replied he, "that they do, and I will declare the same."

"All good," said I; "and when you have done so, I am not certain that the King of Prussia will believe you btoh, or think it a pleasant circumstance to see conquests made on the promise of their not altering the terms of future negotiations. My opinion, dear Sir, is, that whoever is very serious in the desire of making peace, should set very narrow bounds to his ostentatious attempts at conquest."

Here the conversation ended, to our mutual satisfaction. It only remains for me to request of your Grace, as I keep the letters for Sir Robert Ainslie in my possession, to be honoured with your *precise* commands, whether, in the *prospect* of the armistice, to dispatch the messenger to Constantinople?

R. M. K.

It is hoped that the graphic power and unique nature of the foregoing dispatches may have compensated for their length. Sir Robert Keith having thus, as he expresses it in a letter to Lord Auckland, "laid a foundation for success in future negotiations between his own Court and that of Austria," had the farther, and at the time more important satisfaction of seeing one of his suggestions followed out, by a *direct* epistolary intercourse between the monarchs of Austria and Prussia, whereby all grounds for misrepresentation were set aside, and a thorough and permanent good understanding established. This being the case, the obstacles which chicane and diplomacy might have indefinitely

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interposed, quickly vanished, and the Convention of Reichenbach, before mentioned, was entered into in August following, as the basis of a future and general European pacification.

The previous share of Sir R. M. Keith in the pacific overtures of his Court, his position at that of Austria, and, it may be added, the concurrent opinions of nearly all his diplomatic compeers, separately hazarded before the appointment was declared, pointed him out as the natural representative of Great Britain, in her capacity of chief mediator in the approaching Congress. In what spirit he awaited his final instructions, and undertook the welcome office, spite of its unexampled inconveniences, must, in violation perhaps of diplomatic decorum and official dignity, with the exception of the three following letters, be chiefly gathered from those familiar epistles with which their proverbial dulness will be occasionally relieved.

SIR R. MURRAY KEITH TO MR. EWART.*

MY DEAR SIR, *Vienna, July 24th, 1790.*

You have already received, by the courier dispatched from hence in the night of the 22nd inst., the formal and unreserved acceptance of the *statu quo* in the manner required by his Prussian Majesty; and, consequently, all ground of quarrel is, in *fact*, and in *common sense*, done away. To tell you how many onsets I have had with the Austrian ministers, previous to that happy resolution, would be to *slay the slain*. Sufficient it is, that in spite of *two* all-powerful ministers, you and I have had the principal hands in carrying through this salutary measure, which is a benefit (and an important

* The able and indefatigable Resident from Great Britain at Berlin; and her representative at the Convention of Reichenbach.

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one) to one half of Europe. I have sent home to England this day *half* the conclusion, in the consent of this Court; you, my dear Sir, will send the other half of the *piece of gold* from Reichenbach, in a few days. Count Luzy wanted to proceed immediately to the camp of the Grand Vizir; but he is to stay till the sanction of the King of Prussia is *brought hither*. But to avoid all suspicion of a double negotiation, Count Cobenzel promised last night to Monsieur Jacobi to send an Austrian courier this day to Prince Cobourg and Monsieur Thugut, to put a stop to all negotiation, should such an one be on foot, with the Porte, till the issue of that at Reichenbach shall be *known here*. With this provision Baron Jacobi has declared himself well satisfied. I think it proper to tell you that I trust no difficulty will be started at Reichenbach; the expressions about the Low Countries are not explicit enough on *either* side; but Count Herzberg gave a note on the 16th to Prince Reuss, which seems to promise *great facility* on that head. The inclosed bulletin will inform you that the Turkish fortress of Czethen has been taken by *assault*. May it be the last feat of prowess in the war!

Yours, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.

Vienna, August 3rd, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR,

After so much fatigue and trouble we may now congratulate ourselves with that success which a few weeks ago seemed to be far beyond our reach. All is now *well*, and, I trust, *unalterably* so. The ratification is already at Reichenbach, and Spielman* returned hither last night. I took an opportunity, immediately

* Baron Spielman, the Austrian Plenipotentiary at Reichenbach.

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on receipt of your letter, to mention to both the Austrian ministers the fair and warm testimony you gave to the conduct of Monsieur Spielman. It was listened to with the more pleasure as Prince Kaunitz and Count Cobenzel expressed themselves obliged to your friendly offices during the latter part of the negotiation; and there they did justice to the motives of our Court in adhering to the *statu quo*, and likewise to the fair and candid, as well as firm, principles on which we have constantly acted. I was glad to hear them talk so reasonably on a subject on which I have often found them exceedingly sore. One thing, I think, I have observed, and pretty correctly, yet it has never been openly professed, and I beg it may remain for the present a secret between you and me, that this Court has embraced the resolution of relinquishing all projects of exchange or acquisition on the side of Turkey, at least before the conclusion of the peace. In that case, matters will go well and smoothly at the approaching Congress, and the only difficulty will be to get the Empress of Russia to make her separate peace on the same basis, or to reduce her to the necessity of accepting our mediation, and becoming a contracting party at the Congress. Count Luzy set off this day, and with him my messenger Hislop. I gave him in charge, along with the official instructions, your two letters to Sir R. Ainslie, and added to them my most pressing instances to employ all his weight at the Porte, to fulfil the King's views by an immediate *armistice* and *speedy peace*.

Yours,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.

Vienna, Sept. 18*th*, 1790.

DEAR SIR,

I am heartily sorry that the delay of the return of the Austrian messenger from London has hitherto

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prevented my pressing, with that earnestness which I should otherwise have employed, the construction of such a declaration as has been wished for, *previous* to the King of Hungary's departure for Frankfort. This is, indeed, an unlucky circumstance; but it is probably owing to the load of business which the French and Spanish affairs have created in the office during the actual crisis. The King and Queen of Hungary set out for Frankfort on the 23rd. . . . . I congratulate you, my dear Sir, on the progressive re-establishment of your health, and on the near prospect of visiting your friends in Britain. May you enjoy the rest and comfort you have so well earned, and may my endeavours to clench the pacific nail be crowned with full success!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Oct. 6th, 1790.

HERE have I sat, my dear sisters, for this fortnight past, in hourly expectation of a courier with my formal nomination and full powers for the Congress in *Wallachia*, and it is with real regret that I see the season advancing so fast towards winter, when a journey of several hundred miles *out*, and as much *back again*, is no trifle. However, the sisterhood may be assured that I shall undertake it with great alacrity, because I am persuaded I shall be able to do good and to prevent mischief.

You may, perhaps, be told by some idle traveller, that Wallachia is an unhealthy or an inhospitable country. This is *not true*; that country, though greatly exhausted by the war, furnishes everything *for money*, except French wines and articles of luxury, which we shall carry with us, or send down by water on the Danube.

Bucharest, where the Congress will probably be held,

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is a large ragged town, but containing between three and four hundred churches (such as they are) and many lodgeable houses, belonging to the Boyars, the chief men of the country, which will be lent to the plenipos on this occasion. We hope and trust that the meeting will be of short duration. The members of it will be, first, two grave Turks, the Reis Effendi, and another; Baron Herbert from this Emperor, Marquis Lucchesini from Prussia, Count Esterhazy from Hungary, Baron Haeften from the States General, and—myself. I shall do my utmost to forward my own departure and that of my three colleagues (Baron Herbert is already at Bucharest) in about three weeks from this date; and as the roads are good, I hope to make the journey in about a fortnight's time. I am determined to travel, and reside in Wallachia with all manner of *comforts* and *conveniences* about me; and you may rest assured, my dear sisters, that my health shall be carefully attended to. The post goes very regularly from Bucharest hither, and though my letters will be of very old date ere they reach you, I promise you they shall be dispatched very *regularly*. I leave all my heavy baggage and a great part of my household at Vienna, and hope to be back here before the new year.

If you choose to see my journey on your best map, it is as follows: To Presburg, Buda, Temeswaer, Orsova, Crajovia, and Bucharest; all at present possessed by the House of Austria. Wallachia is to be restored to the Turks at the peace. The Empress of Russia is obstinate, and will make war or peace her *own way*.

Now, my dear Anne, you will be curious to know if Stratton accompanies me to the Congress. He wishes it, and so do I; but the answer of the Duke of Leeds will determine whether he goes, or remains at Vienna.*

* The latter arrangement was adopted; Mr. S. remained, in Sir R. M. Keith's absence, as Secretary of Legation.

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But I have got (somewhat unexpectedly) a young companion for that journey. Along with my last messenger from England, came Lord Galloway's second son, strongly recommended to me. He is not yet seventeen, has had a very *good* education, is stout and hardy, wishes much to learn, and, from what I have seen of him, possesses good talents and an amiable disposition. I have made him exceedingly welcome. He is lodged in my house, and shall see the new scene along with me, amongst Turks, Greeks, and Barbarians. I hope to make an useful man of him in *this line*, which his father wishes him to follow. He starts under the personal patronage of the Duke of Leeds. I have Lord North's *third* son with me here, an amiable and *well informed* young man as any I *ever* met with. He intended likewise to go to Bucharest and Constantinople; but his constitution was for many years very *weakly*. He is now much better; but his father, Lord Guilford, left it to my *conscience* to stop his journey, if I thought it dangerous for his health; and, after mature deliberation, both Mr. North and I were forced to give up a plan which had given us so much pleasure. He will return to England in November, and come out again next year. I need not say how glad I was to repay to this charming young man, some part of the obligations which I owe to his father.

The Hungarian and Neapolitan Courts are feasting at Frankfort, and we suppose that the new Emperor will be crowned there to-morrow. They will *hunt* their way back through Bohemia, and are expected here in the end of the month. The Hungarian coronation will take place on the 15th of November, and at Presburg, instead of Buda. This will save King Leopold a long journey, and much inconvenience. The Neapolitan Court rest here till the month of January. Adieu till to-morrow.

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October 9th.

I have detained this messenger till the 9th, and am not yet a grain wiser about my Wallachian journey. But there is every reason to suppose it will take place in less than three weeks. The appointment will appear in the London Gazette, and I shall set out the *moment* it reaches me. Direct your letters as usual to *Vienna*. I leave a careful person to receive and forward my correspondence. All your acquaintance here—the Pergens, Thuns, &c., are well. Madame de Thun's two youngest daughters, (Princess Lignowski, and Caroline,) are actually on the road to England! where, I am sure, they ought to meet with a kind reception.

I did a great pleasure to Monsieur Pergen the other day. An old comrade of his (an officer in Wurmser's Hussars) had been taken prisoner by the Turks, and was deploring his misery in the Seven Towers. I applied, at *Pepy's* * request, for his release, and the Sultan most handsomely sent him to me by my last messenger! Have you, my dear Anne, any comrade you wish to be *relieved* from the Seraglio, or desirous to be sent thither? My hearty good wishes to all my cronies. They will be delighted with the stories I shall have to tell them of my travels. Write to me often—and all your news. I embrace you most cordially.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Nov. 1st, 1790.

A FEW words more, my dear sisters, before I go to the *world's end*. It is not to Bucharest that I am going, as the English newspapers say, (and to make a peace with *Spain!*) but to the dominions of Turkey, to a village

* The German diminutive for Joseph among intimate friends.

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called *Sistovo*, in Bulgaria. I daresay that beautiful winter residence is too insignificant to be found in any of *your* maps; but if you cannot discover it, let me tell you that the Grand Signor marked it out with his own dear pen, and that it is situated on the Danube, fifteen miles from Nicopolis, and five-and-thirty from Ruschuk, the birth-place of the present Grand Vizir. I wish the deuce had them both, for making so queer a choice! To mend the matter, I hear they have sent a bashaw thither to prepare *sixty* houses for the reception of *four* plenipos; fifteen houses a-piece—judge what pretty huts they must be! But we have sent down from hence, by the Danube, all sorts of furniture (even to grates and stoves for fire), and I promise you to make a very lodgeable barrack out of my own fifteen. We have three Turkish plenipos to meet us—Reis Effendi, &c., with fine-sounding names—and if I had not other matter to bring forward, I would send you their names to fill up my paper.

Yet, as this is a *very honourable* commission, I undertake it cheerfully, and I purpose to make a peace that will last our *grandchildren*. Marquis Lucchesini (the Prussian), set out this morning; Baron Haeften (the Dutchman), will set out in a week; and I (Murray's Hall*), will follow the republic in two or three days after, or about the 12th instant. We need not leave this sooner, as our baggage will be four weeks on the Danube. I told you in my last all my road to Bucharest. This I am still to pursue. But from thence I have an hundred and thirty English miles to a place called Simniza, on the Danube, from whence we cross over to Sistovo, a place inhabited by half Turks and half Greeks. I daresay, after all, it will turn out better and more comfortable than *calumny* has whispered. I travel like

* The name of the writer's estate, by which Scotsmen are often designa

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a Persian Prince, with every sort of convenience about me, and I am determined that neither I, nor any person belonging to me, shall want for any comfort money can purchase. The Turks are said to be very magnificent in their treatment of plenipos; to whom they make a large allowance for provisions, &c. I despise their *piastres*, and if I can forward the work as speedily as I propose, I shall leave them and their piastres with all possible expedition. I give you my word, my dear sisters, I expect to be back at Vienna early in February, with a light purse but a hale constitution. There goes a regular post twice a week between the Congress and Vienna, and be assured you shall hear from me regularly. Direct your letters as usual. Stratton, who remains here as the King's *Chargé d'Affaires*, will forward them carefully. I am heartily sorry that Mr. North's health will not permit him to be of the party, but I shall take my little Galloway Stuart, who is really a very fine lad.

So much for self and Sistovo; now for Kings and Princes. The Emperor came back to us from Frankfort, hale and stout, a week ago; he sets off for Hungary on the 9th, and will be crowned at Presburg on the 15th instant. The Hungarians have made a sad piece of work of it. They have shown a desire to be very troublesome, and have hurt nobody but themselves. I trust they will be wiser in the Diet which follows the coronation. The foolish spirit of the times had led that brave nation to aim at innovation with a vengeance; but as they never really knew what sort of constitution they had in view, they must be contented with their old one. Temper, and the King's goodness, may improve it hereafter. The people in the Netherlands are, I believe, very tired of their anarchy; if so, they will be helped back by England and Holland into their old pasture, and there they may feed and fatten like their forefathers.

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The French are the only nation whom nobody *can* help; they can never be restored to their senses but by the heavy blister of a civil war, and applied *hot*—from *head to heel!* I declare that in such cases a civil war is the only true antidote. Spain, if she goes to war with us (as they say she intends), must be in a delirium, for no one can tell why or how she can support it. If she could set Louis the Sixteenth again on his throne, that would be worth all the danger; but how her being *thrashed at sea* can mend his unhappy fate at Versailles, I am at a loss to foresee. My dear Anne, my dear Anne! depend upon it, this part of the globe called Europe has got a *hitch*, somehow or other, and has got either too near the sun or too far from it; for three parts in four of our brains have become addled or crazy! We have the morals and principles of government of African negroes, with the luxury and effeminacy of Asiatic nabobs; and by and by, our models, the French, will enjoy the liberty of—Botany Bay: well do they deserve it!

I hope my Bulgarians are good sort of people; they have no Mirabeaus or Vandernoots* among them: that is one comfort! Now will I descend from my political stand, and amble through the rest of my letter on a Scotch pony. When do you get back to *New* Reekie?† We have here a young St. Saphorin (nephew to the Danish ministèr), your acquaintance, and a fine kind-hearted lad, who *runs over* with gratitude for the hospitality he met with in Scotland. He speaks of you and many of our friends with true regard, and is so *keen* an Edinburgher, that he tells me with *rapture* he sees a prospect of the *Luckenbooths*‡ being pulled down! I will chat with you, my dear sister, while I can, though

* The leader of the Dutch (so-called) patriots.

† The then recently-occupied New Town, of Edinburgh, where his family had purchased, or were about building a house.

‡ An eye-sore to the fine High-street of the Old Town.

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you shall have another letter before I depart. We have a fine autumn, the roads are good everywhere, and a little frost will even mend them. You would laugh if you saw what precautions I take against Bulgarian barbarism. An honest man, with my three carriages in his suite, might sit down in a barn and have all his conveniences about him. This, in my opinion, is a proper use of money. As it is probably the last campaign I shall make among the Turks, I am determined to provide largely against cold and famine.

I have just now seen in my morning walk upon the ramparts of this city, what gave me real pleasure, but which, if it had been exhibited in the reign of Charles the Sixth, or even in that of Maria-Theresa, would have been thought to prognosticate the *downfall* of the House of Austria: the Archduke Francis, heir of the throne, walking in a great-coat, arm in arm with his new married *wife*, in a warm gown, and without a single servant or living creature attending them. This (said I to myself) is sheer good sense, and a strong claim to domestic happiness. You see, my dear Anne, that in some respects the world alters for the better. Every body blessed the couple as they passed. Adieu.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Nov. 15th, 1790.

More last words, my dear sisters; for I will scribble on this sheet from day to day everything that occurs, for your amusement or information. The Emperor is crowning at this very moment at Presburg, and (what will surprise you) one of the persons who puts the crown on his head to-day is his own *fourth* son, Leopold. You must know that instead of choosing out of *four* persons named by the King, a Palatine, or First

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Magistrate of the State, the Diet unanimously requested that His Majesty would confer the great employment on that handsome and amiable young Prince, who is already colonel of a regiment of Hussars, wears the dress, and speaks the Hungarian language. No sooner asked than granted—and now, as I told you, he is exercising one of his functions. A subsequent one is to represent to the Sovereign the national *grievances*. This he will do with a gentle eloquence; he is a charming young man, just eighteen.

The Emperor is in luck to be crowned by his near relations; for at Frankfort the Imperial crown was set on his head by his own brother, and his queen's uncle, the Elector of Cologne and Triers. One other singularity—the King of Naples appears at Presburg in the *Hungarian* dress, which gives great pleasure to the nation. The Hungarians will, I hope, recover all their loyalty and good temper. They have made but a silly figure, with all their cavilling, since this King mounted the throne, but he will make them *love him sincerely*.

So much for monarchs; of whom I shall see no more for some time to come. The Dutch minister and I undertake our peregrinations at the distance of one day from each other. We hope to be at Bucharest on the 2nd or 3rd of December, and our *dear Sistovo* is only two days' journey from thence. I cannot help laughing at my *fifteen* houses prepared for me! I intend to carry a common draftsman along with me, to scratch out a resemblance of every odd thing in Bulgaria. You shall one day *admire* my fifteen palaces, and you shall have the portraits of all my colleagues, Turks and Christians! I am called away from this chat. Adieu, my dear sisters. Lord send us a speedy and a merry meeting! God bless you all.

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November 17th.

Thank Heaven, I have just learned for certain, though rather confusedly, that our disputes with Spain are terminated, and much to our honour and satisfaction. You cannot imagine, my dear sisters, what pleasure this gives me, not only as a patriot, but as a negotiator, going on a very troublesome commission, to the completion of which I should have found a thousand obstacles, if a Spanish war had broken out. I now see the best grounds to hope that pacific sentiments will prevail all over Europe, and that even the haughty Empress of Russia will soon tire of being the only European power at war. In short, my dear Anne, this happy event sets me much more at my ease than I should otherwise have felt.

My Dutch colleague set out this morning; I shall follow him to-morrow evening, and keep close behind him the whole way. This is an act of friendship, for he has but a crazy constitution, and it is a comfort to him to know that I follow him with a number of handy servants, a good surgeon, &c., &c. The weather is as fine as it can be at this season of the year; clear sunshine, and cold; may it last me till Sistovo! I shall meet the Emperor on Friday, and the Queen of Naples on the road to Presburg. He has finished his business there very handsomely. The King of Naples goes a hunting at Prince Lichtenstein's, Prince Auersberg's, &c., in Bohemia; where noble chases and sumptuous feasts are prepared for him, and will not come back to Vienna till the 12th December.

Sir R. M. Keith set out to assist at the Congress at Sistovo in Bulgaria, November 19th, 1790.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Buda, in Hungary, Nov. 22d, 1790.

I CAN only give you a bit of a letter to-day, my dear sisters, as I only stop for a few hours, and have a score of indispensable letters to write. Bad roads, heavy rains, and miserable horses, for the last ten stages; and, consequently, a snail's pace in travelling. But that is *nothing*, for I have every convenience around me of my own, and a patience, attended by good health and good spirits, which stand proof against all trials.

I am afraid that for *five hundred miles*, from hence to our blessed Sistovo, I have nothing but mud and morass to wade through. What care I? more horses, more provisions, more patience, and contempt for trifles, will carry me clear through. He who frets at what he cannot mend, and which does not materially affect his health, or derogate from his reputation, is a *blockhead*. Thousands have waded through the sloughs of Lower Hungary, the Bannat and Wallachia; why cannot *I* do as well, or *better* than they have done? I had the great comfort of hearing from Fitzherbert before leaving Vienna, that his work* was handsomely finished. That event will greatly facilitate mine; for all quarrels amongst great powers are *cousins german*, and breed or annihilate each other. The Russian Dame will become more tractable, and then we may shut the *Temple of Janus* for all Christendom. If we do, I will throw the *key* into the Black Sea, that nobody may open it again in our days.

My young companion Stuart, is an amiable lad, and knows a great deal. I am teaching him *honest* politics, and *practical* philosophy, which is a better thing.

I am forced to make a long circuit from hence (look at your map,) by Arad, to reach Temeswaer. The shorter

* The peace between Great Britain and Spain.

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road by Segedin, is impassable. I shall reach Temeswaer in five or six days, and shall write to you from thence. Letters, letters, I beseech you, and a great deal of news; else how am I to be *nourished* at *Sistovo?* Lord send me a speedy conclusion and a safe return! I left all my friends at Vienna, *young* and *old*, in good health. I must finish. Love to my cronies; they must pray for their comrade exiled among the unbelievers. Adieu, my dear sisters. Let me finish this job of work to general satisfaction, and then *Te Deum!* I embrace you all *most cordially*.

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

MY DEAR SISTERS, *Temeswaer, Nov. 29th, 1790.*

I have been dragged hither, through mud and mire, by miserable cats of post-horses, but without any accident; and I have a good heart to undertake the remaining *half* of my journey, though ten times more difficult than the preceding one. From hence to Orsova the whole country is in the state of ruin and desolation, to which the Turks reduced it in 1788. Almost every town and village are laid in ashes, and only a few houses are rebuilt at certain stages, for the scanty accommodation of travellers. I shall set out to-morrow, and shall sleep the night after on the ruins of Caransebes, the place to which *lying* tradition says Ovid was banished; and from thence pursue my journey through the bloody defiles of Meadia, Cornia, and Illova, to the place where old Orsova *stood* two years ago. I shall then enter Wallachia, and stop a few hours at Czernetz, a colony founded by Trajan, and close to the small remains of his stupendous bridge over the Danube. I shall also see the famous island and fortress of Orsova, from the hill of Allion, whence it was lately bombarded.

All this sounds mighty pompous, my dear Anne, but,

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alas! I shall see *nothing* on that route but miserable ruins, and a thin population reduced to great distress. But this Bannat of Temeswaer is one of the most fruitful countries of Europe, wherever industry is in any shape exerted; and in a year or two it will again overflow with abundance. A large *three years' old ox* can be bought here, in time of peace, for less than a pound sterling; a lamb for sixpence, and a load of hay, as much as four oxen can draw, for *three and sixpence!*

One very strange thing is remarked by every traveller through the Bannat. The villages are large, though distant, and we meet, by turns, Wallachian, German, Sclavonian, and *French*, nay even *Italian* villages; the inhabitants of which have different languages, religions, manners, features, and modes of government; having no other intercourse with each other than that of mere necessity, and *never intermarrying*. A dash of the Gipsey nation, and a sprinkling of Jews, are met with everywhere, and the whole furnishes a grotesque and singular variety. What do you think, my dear Anne, of going from the Sclavonian village of Falygahasa, where not a word of any of our lingos is understood, to the next village of Charleville, or Marienville, or St. Hubert, where *parlez vous* is the sole language? The French are mostly from Lorraine, sober and industrious people; the Germans from Suabia, strong and active; and I was pleased to find that both nations thrive and grow rich. The Turkish war brought them, on this side, a ready vent for their commodities, and at *ten* prices. So much for the Bannat.

As to Wallachia, we have to expect all the bad effects of Greek despotism under Turkish tyranny; improved by the successive conquests and depredations of all the contending nations. I look for the worst of roads and the most miserable huts for resting places; but I set them at defiance, and only dread a dreary winter in an inhospitable Bulgarian abode. I need be in no hurry to

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get there, as our vessel (after a month's navigation on the Danube) has not yet reached Orsova. To get to Sistovo before our household furniture and every article for housekeeping, would be *folly* indeed! We shall therefore make a halt at Bucharest till we hear that our servants have got to Sistovo.

I have had fine weather for the last six days. Should it rain only for four-and-twenty hours, I shall be in the *Slough of Despond,* and shall recapitulate the Pilgrim's Progress with a devout recollection. I thought to find some memorable remnants of Roman buildings on the road to Wallachia, but am sorry to learn that in the last Turkish invasion they have been thrown down or defaced. In short, my dear sisters, I must centre all my comfort in the hope of doing good and deserving the *full approbation* of my superiors. I have already laid in my claim to be relieved with all possible expedition (after my work is finished) from my Bulgarian thraldom. In this point I believe I shall be indulged.

I rejoice at the Spanish peace on every ground, and trust that so good an example on the part of the Dons will make a salutary impression on the Russians. They have just now taken the Turkish town of Kylia (at the mouth of the Danube) by storm; yet I look for a speedy return to pacific sentiments, for how can Russia fight three or four nations *alone?*

You are now half-a-dozen letters in my debt, my dear Anne, and I pray you to repay them with a world of news and anecdotes; for I grow more and more *thirsty* for home intelligence as I draw nearer to the bounds of Christendom. I am glad to hear it affirmed that our Turkish colleagues are reasonable men. That will shorten our work, as I dreaded Ottoman ignorance and chicane. Remember me candidly to those I love, and prepare yourselves to sing Te Deum when I announce my return to Vienna. Health and comfort be with you all!

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Bucharest, December 12th, 1790.

I ARRIVED here on the 10th, in perfect health, my dear sisters, after all the perils and inconveniences of a most abominable journey. I have not time to-day for description; but this capital of Wallachia is a sink of mud and misery, interspersed with oriental-looking palaces of the principal boyars, with vestiges of barbarous magnificence. I am in the house of the principal magnate, Prince Brancovan, who (with nine of his relations) was banished by the late tyrant Maurojeni, to the Island of Rhodes. Maurojeni's head has just now been cut off by the Grand Vizier, so that Brancovan may get home again. There is neither chair, table, nor bed belonging to *him* left in this house—that I can answer for; but large *gousty** rooms, and laced sofas. The Grand Vizier himself runs a risk at present of losing his own head, for not having made a stout effort to prevent the Russians from taking Kylia Nova, at the mouth of the Danube, and now investing the fortress of Ismail. Look to your map, my dear Anne, and pity the Vizier, who is ordered (to save his neck) to pass the Danube, at this season of the year, to relieve Ismail!

But now for Sistovo. I shall set out the day after to-morrow, and hope to cross the Danube in a Turkish armed vessel, on the third day. On the 19th instant, all the ministers of the Congress will be assembled there. I hope we shall make speedy and satisfactory work of it. Sistovo is on a hill, the air and water are good. The houses, as I hear, are very small, and inconvenient; my personal habitation is to consist in two of them, joined by a wooden bridge; my servants will be

* *Scottice*—for "waste" and windy.

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in a number of smaller houses around me. Stuart, who is a very excellent lad, shall be lodged in my PALACE, of which you shall hear hereafter, my dear sisters, an admirable description. I am trying to get a draftsman to take faithful sketches of every thing in that strange country. The Turks, who know nothing of the most necessary furniture, have been at an immense expense to furnish our little dwellings. I hear of *velvet* and *gold* sofas, but not of anything for convenience. But all will be *well* if our business goes on prosperously.

The letters travel from Europe most slowly; my latest from England is of the 5th November! Judge of my patience. This country of Wallachia ought to be an absolute garden, and is almost a barren desert, by the sloth and misery of its inhabitants. This town has thirty or forty stone churches, twice as many of wood, fifty palaces, and not one comfortable burgher's house. The streets are paved throughout with *thick* wooden planks, which dance as a coach passes over them.

You would laugh, my dear sisters, to see the slow progression of your brother's cavalcade. Three carriages, with sixteen or eighteen horses, or oxen to each, and five or six peasants at the coach door, to prevent overturns. A guard of hussars before; an officer, in a cart, drawn by four horses, following; and this magnificent *cortège*, after creeping twelve hours, makes two short stages, and dives under ground at night into a damp and dirty Wallachian hut, with bare walls.

But I must have done, as I am writing an immense letter to the office, and an *estafette* will be dispatched to Vienna in an hour or two. Love to all friends. Be of good cheer; I entertain sanguine hopes of a speedy and honourable issue. Lord grant it! for I shall soon tire of Bulgarian grandeur. I embrace the sisterhood, and Aunt Bab, with the warmest affection.

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Temeswaer, Nov. 27th, 1790.

My Lord,

Your Grace's dispatch of the 5th November reached me at Buda, and it was matter of great satisfaction to me to learn by it that the differences between our Court and that of Spain were on the point of being terminated in the most honourable manner.* I received at the same time a letter from Mr. Fitzherbert,† dated on the 28th October, acquainting me that the definitive convention had been signed by him and Count Florida Blanca, by which the harmony between the two crowns was established on a secure and permanent basis.

I beg leave to congratulate your Grace and all his Majesty's confidential servants, on an event which adds fresh lustre to the King's reign, and furnishes a most striking proof of the vigour and wisdom of his government. I am willing to hope that the conduct of Spain will be productive of very salutary effects at the Court of Petersburgh, and that the Empress will think it prudent, in the actual situation of things, to renew her propositions of accommodation with the Ottoman Porte, on the principle of the strict *status quo*.

I was disappointed in my expectation of finding letters here from Marquis Lucchesini,‡ and am, therefore, without any very certain intelligence respecting the late operations of the Russians on the Lower Danube. The

* Those regarding the Spanish aggressions on British subjects at Nootka Sound, which national honour justly required and insisted on due reparation; a war was thus averted—"the first shot of which" (says a contemporary), "would have embroiled Europe."

† Afterwards Lord St. Helens, the Ambassador at Madrid, and friend and correspondent of Sir R. M. Keith.

‡ The Prussian Plenipotentiary.

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governor of this fortress has assured me that the Russians (after taking the town of Kylia by storm) are advancing, by sea and land, to carry into execution the extensive plans which Prince Potemkin has formed. But in the language which I meet with here, I think I perceive a disposition to overrate the strength of the Russian army, and the military talents of its commander.

The Dutch minister, Baron Haeften, set out from hence yesterday for Orsova, and I shall follow him to-morrow. Our journey has been slow and fatiguing, owing to deep roads and very bad post-horses; but the remaining half of it, which is yet before us, will be infinitely more difficult, as the Austrian and Turkish armies, in the late campaign of 1788, left the roads in a very ruinous state, and the most necessary reparations are hardly yet begun. The Turks laid the whole country waste, and left almost every town and village between this and Orsova in ashes. Nevertheless I shall pursue my journey diligently, though all hurry be wholly unnecessary, as our vessel on the Danube (after a month's navigation) has not reached Orsova, from whence it will require eight or ten days to get to our inhospitable Bulgarian village of Sistovo. We must not think of arriving there before our vessel, as on its lading of household furniture, and every necessary article for housekeeping, our means of subsistence there, with any degree of convenience, must entirely depend.

Baron Herbert is still at Bucharest, and Marquis Lucchesini is probably at the camp of the Grand Vizier. We hear that one of the Turkish plenipotentiaries is already at Sistovo, and the others are soon expected there.

It is with cheerful, as well as active zeal, that I pursue the execution of the important commission with which his Majesty has been graciously pleased to entrust me.

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I entertain the sanguine hope of bringing it to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion; and when I shall have attained that object of my ambition, I shall most earnestly request of your Grace's goodness to shorten as much as possible the dreary residence which awaits me in Bulgaria. I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

[*Secret and Confidential.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Bucharest, Dec. 12th, 1790.

My Lord,

After the most fatiguing journey that can well be imagined through deep roads, where *sixteen* horses to each carriage could hardly drag it along, I reached this city the night before last, and met with the most polite reception from the Imperial Minister, Baron Herbert, and from the Commander-in-Chief, General Enzenberg.

I was hardly an hour in this place, when the Dutch minister communicated to me the substance of a very interesting conversation which Baron Herbert had brought on with him, the preceding day, in regard to the instructions that minister had received from Vienna, touching the conduct he is to hold at the approaching Congress.

Judging that the same motives which had induced the Austrian minister to speak openly to my Dutch colleagues, would infallibly lead him to broach the same topics to me, and perhaps with a still greater degree of confidence; I furnished Baron Herbert an early opportunity of explaining himself fully, which he eagerly embraced, and the following is the precise result of a long conference, which took place between us at my house yesterday morning.

Baron Herbert began by telling me very frankly, that

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he had shown his full powers to the Marquis Lucchesini, and to the Dutch minister, and had seen *theirs;* and that neither those from Berlin, nor from the Hague, were conceived in such terms as to correspond completely with the wishes and expectations of the Court of Vienna. He thought it, therefore, a fair and just proceeding, to compare his full powers with mine, in order to obviate, as soon as possible, every material obstacle which might arise to prevent the conclusion of the definitive treaty, even if all parties should immediately agree in fixing the terms of pacification. He proceeded to explain to me that both in the Prussian and Dutch full powers, the Imperial titles of his sovereign were omitted; which he justly ascribed to the date of those documents being prior to the Emperor's election. This point, he said, would be easily remedied by new full powers being sent to those ministers, before the signature of the treaty. But without the insertion of those titles, he was not at liberty to *conclude anything.**

The second point he owned to be of much greater difficulty; yet he must look upon it as equally a *sine quâ non* of his future proceedings; as he had his hands tied up by the express orders of his sovereign, from settling *definitively* any one article of the treaty of peace, without the *avowed guarantee* of the three mediating powers. He alleged that their guarantee of the future treaty had been stipulated at Reichenbach, under the proviso that his *then* Hungarian Majesty should make a formal request of it, at each of the mediating Courts. This very proper step had been taken by the Court of Vienna; and he, Baron Herbert, now laid claim, in the name of his sovereign, to the completion of that engagement on the part of His Britannic Majesty.

* This circumstance, apparently so trifling, amid the consideration of the most weighty affairs, shows the *technical* obstructions to which negotiators are liable.

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I immediately replied by expressing my astonishment that the Austrian ministry (who must have remarked that in the ratification given by our Court to the Reichenbach convention, no mention was made of an eventual guarantee,) should now insist so peremptorily on making that guarantee a *previous* step to the formation of a treaty, the contents of which, having now been discussed, could not be foretold.* I added that it gave me pain to find such an unexpected, as well as insurmountable bar thrown in the way of our negotiation; as I could not think of proposing to my Court, what I myself must deem so unreasonable a requisition; the more so, as I had it in positive command to make no promise of guarantee, till the whole articles of the treaty should be brought to maturity, and submitted to his Majesty's consideration; leaving it then to the wisdom of my royal master to determine how it might best become him to act in respect to the guarantee of the whole, or any part of it.

Baron Herbert readily acknowledged the justness of these observations, and pursued the conversation in the following terms: "To require the guarantee of the Court of England to a treaty *undefined*, and even to this hour *unbroached*, would indeed be highly unreasonable. But my Court authorises me to make known to you, Sir, ministerially and solemnly, what the treaty we are about to negotiate *must be*, in its *precise tenor*, before I can put my signature to it. It *must* rest on the single and express basis of the *statu quo* previous to the war, taken in its most strict and rigorous sense; and to *that* your Court will, I dare say, make no scruple to grant its guarantee; as I hereby pledge my word of honour to you, Sir, that at the ensuing Congress I neither shall make to the

* The instructions demanded from his Court by Sir R. M. Keith, prove how completely the pretension (however unfounded) had been foreseen by him.

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Turkish plenipotentaries, nor admit on their part, any proposal whatever in addition to, or in deviation from that *sole and rigid principle of pacification.* My confidence in you, Sir," continued Baron Herbert, "goes so far that I will not only give you a copy of my full powers, but *show* you the explicit orders of Prince Kaunitz, which trace out to me the line of conduct I now pursue, and put it wholly out of my power to depart, in any shape, from that strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum.*"

He afterwards showed me his full powers, in which he insisted (though not to my entire conviction) that the phrases I have underlined in the inclosed copy of them, laid him under the indispensable obligation of concluding *nothing* without the avowed guarantee of all the mediating powers.

He then desired me to follow with my eye the individual words of a paragraph which he read, of Prince Kaunitz's instructions, which expressly orders him to abide most strictly by the *status quo* previous to the war.

Baron Herbert's language surprised me not a little; I therefore put the question to him if he would consent to adopt as the sole ground of pacification, the phrase made use of by your Grace, in the late instrument of ratification, *Status quo, idem scilicet, id admissum, qui, ante bellum jam nunc instans extitit?*

He replied, without hesitation, "Yes, Sir, and I would sign the peace to-morrow which that phrase defines; with this single additional clause, that the titles of all the treaties which existed between Austria and the Ottoman Porte, previous to the late rupture, shall be *recapitulated in the treaty;* and that each of them shall be declared to remain in full force and *vigour.* This precaution," added he, "is absolutely necessary with the Turks, who believe that all treaties which are not specified in the stipulations of a new treaty of peace,

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have been wholly and irrevocably abolished by the intervening war."

"Sir," said I, "the clause you mention appears to me to be liable to two very material objections; the first, that by the mention of so many treaties, you open to the Turks a door to endless discussion of the several articles they contain, and perhaps to some indiscreet claims which those plenipotentiaries may be inclined to set on foot. My second objection is, that if, by the recapitulation of those treaties, you mean to found hereafter a claim to his Majesty's guarantee of their respective stipulations, you aim at what I can hardly conceive will be granted. For how can it be expected that England should become the guarantee of treaties which she had no hand in framing, and several of which she in all probability never saw?"

Monsieur Herbert answered—that if England became the guarantee of the *status quo ante bellum*, she must include the *moral* as well as *physical* state in which the two countries stood with respect to each other at that period, and that the mention of the titles of the aforementioned treaties made no difference in the obligations of the guarantee. But, he added, in order to demonstrate how little apprehension ought to be entertained on that score, he would, in reporting to Prince Kaunitz what had passed in our conference, make it his request to that minister, that complete copies might immediately be sent to London of all those treaties which he himself was directed to mention in the definitive one at Sistovo. He promised me, in the meantime, an exact list of those treaties which I send here inclosed.

The conversation ended by my telling him that without presuming to foretell, in any shape, what effect his present declaration would produce in London, I would endeavour to remove, as far as it depended on me, the obstacles which he acknowledged to stand in the way of

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a happy termination of the business in which we are engaged. That I should write to your Grace an exact account of all that had passed between us, and beg of him to forward it by estafette. This he promised to do without delay; acquainting me that the Marquis Lucchesini is authorised by his full powers to guarantee *every article* of the treaty; and that Baron Haeften (who has no such authority) had likewise desired him to forward a dispatch to the Hague on the subject.

I send this letter *open* to Lord Auckland, to be forwarded, that his lordship may be fully master of the subject, if he thinks proper to confer with the Grand Pensionary in relation to it.

Marquis Lucchesini is at Sistovo, since the 5th inst., and the three Turkish plenipotentiaries have been there for some weeks. Baron Haeften sets out to-morrow for that place; I shall follow him on Wednesday, and Baron Herbert on Friday; so that on Monday, the 19th, all the members of the Congress will be assembled at Sistovo.

As soon as I shall have conversed with Marquis Lucchesini there, and learned from him what may be expected from the dispositions and views of the Turks, I shall be able to form a judgment in regard to the probable duration and issue of the Congress. Should I be so fortunate as to find the Porte as ready as Austria shows herself, to negotiate on the strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, I shall dispatch a messenger to England to receive those commands from his Majesty which (supposing the consent of Prussia and Holland) may enable me to bring the business to a speedy conclusion.

The progress of the Russian arms will probably render the Turks more compliant in our negotiation. Baron Herbert tells me that they are masters not only of Isaacca, Tultzia, and the navigation of the Lower Danube,

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but have invested Ismail: which it is thought the Grand Vizier, who has received orders to march on it with his whole force, will find it a very difficult matter to relieve.

I have received (through Vienna) a very kind letter from Sir Robert Ainslie, in which his Excellency, though he had not received accounts of my formal appointment, takes it for granted that I am to be the King's plenipotentiary at the Congress; and adds, that the King's principal dragoman at Constantinople holds himself in readiness to set out to join me on the shortest notice. I shall hope to find him at Sistovo, as my letters, making a similar request, must have reached his Excellency three weeks ago.

R. M. K.

In corroboration (were any necessary) of the foregoing ministerial assurances; as a warrant for Sir R. M. Keith's sanguine expectations of a prompt termination of his mission; as a proof of the personal good will and esteem of the writer for the British envoy; and, above all, as a contrast (which, if not painful, would be ludicrous,) with every feature of the succeeding conduct of the Austrian prime minister, the following private note, which preceded the opening of the Congress, may be given:—

LE PRINCE DE KAUNITZ À MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER KEITH.

À Vienne, ce 15 Decembre, 1790.

Je viens de recevoir la lettre que vous avez bien voulu m'écrire de Czernetz; et j'ai l'honneur de vous en remercier, comme d'une attention bien obligeante de votre part. Je suis bien aise que les intentions de l'Empéreur aient été exécutées à votre entière satisfaction par Messieurs les Généraux Soro et Hahn; et je

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ne doute pas qu' à votre retour, ils ne tâchent de vous être également de toute l'utilité possible. Je souhaite avoir le plaisir de vous revoir bientôt parmi nous ; et je m'en flatte, non moins pour *l'amour de vous*, que pour le bien de la chose, attender que le *status quo* que l'Empéreur a bien voulu faire offrir à la Porte par le canal des puissances médiatrices, c'est à dire le retablissement de toutes choses (*nulles exceptées*) rélatives aux deux puissances belligérentes, *rien en deça, et rien en delá*, ne parait exiger que l'extension matérielle de cet engagement réciproque, fidèlement suivie de son éxécution ; et que pour cela peu de jours pourront suffire : supposé, comme j'en suis persuadé, que l'on *n'admettra ni chicanes, ni interprétations, à un engagement, lequel loyalement n'en est pas susceptible.* Tâchez de vous maintenir en bonne santé, ainsi que Monsieur le Baron de Haeften, et Monsieur Lucchesini, dont je demande souvent des nouvelles au Baron de Jacobi : et soyez persuadé, je vous prie, du sentimens de parfaite considération, et de *l'ancienne bonne amitié*, avec lesquels j'ai l'honneur d' être,

Mon cher Chevalier,
Votre très humble et obéissant serviteur,
KAUNITZ.

The same motives which dictate the insertion of the foregoing note, viz., its *more* than diplomatic inconsistency with the subsequent conduct, on which it reads like a burlesque, have suggested its translation into *plain English.*

PRINCE KAUNITZ TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Vienna, Dec. 15th, 1790.

I HAVE just received the letter you were good enough to write to me from Czernetz, and I have the honour to

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return you my thanks for so obliging a mark of attention. I am very glad to think that the Emperor's intentions have been executed to your entire satisfaction by Generals Soro and Hahn, and I doubt not they will equally endeavour on your return to be of all possible use to you. I wish to have the pleasure of seeing you soon again among us, and flatter myself with the hope of it, not less from *my regard for you*, than for the good of the cause; seeing that the *statu quo* which the Emperor has been pleased to offer to the Porte, through the channel of the mediating powers, viz., the re-establishment of all things *without exception*, relative to the two belligerents, neither on *this* side nor *that* of their precise former position, seems to require only the substantive extension of this reciprocal engagement, faithfully followed up by its execution; and that for this purpose a few days ought to suffice, supposing (as I am persuaded) that neither *chicane nor misrepresentations* will be admitted into a compact in *which, honestly carried out, they can find no place.*

I beg you will try and keep yourself in good health, as well as Baron Haeften and Monsieur Lucchesini, about whom I make frequent inquiries of Baron Jacobi; and pray you to be convinced of the sentiments of perfect consideration, as well as of *ancient good fellowship*, with which I have the honour to remain,

My dear Sir Robert,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

KAUNITZ.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, Dec. 23rd, 1790.

I HAVE fairly bid adieu to Christendom since Saturday last, and am now, my dear sisters, an inhabitant of a large Bulgarian *borough*, for town it is not, and village it must not be called, as it contains above five thousand *houses*, such as they are, and a very crowded population. It is situated on the banks of the Danube, on heaven knows how many small hills, with deep chasms between them. The air is excellent, and the water good, so that in point of health it is infinitely preferable to Wallachia.

But let me give you the particulars of my *exit* from that last province, and my *entry* into the Turkish dominions. I must tell you that I slept at a village in Wallachia where there is a large detachment of Austrian cavalry. Notice being sent to the Turks of my intention to cross the Danube, I set out at ten o'clock in the forenoon (the finest mild sunshine I ever saw), and with no less than sixteen (not six) horses to *each* of my three carriages. I was carried at full gallop along a grassy plain, escorted by a detachment of the Austrian cavalry, and all the officers on horseback, together with the chief magistrate of Simniza and his *suite;* in short a most magnificent *cortège*.

I found, on the brink of the Danube, two or three Turkish row-boats armed, and with *pavilions* at their sterns, and cushions to sit on. The mehmandar (an officer appointed to live with me and regulate every thing) was the first to compliment me; then an officer from the tefterdar (treasurer) and other Turks, who took place along with Stuart and me in the first boat, while all the servants and carriages were stowed in the others. My fleet fired their guns (little ragged cannons), three and three, and were answered by an old castle on

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the Bulgarian side. The Danube as smooth as glass, and the shore on the Turkish bank lofty and majestic. When we touched the land, a great number of well-dressed Turks met me on horseback, and gave me a fine horse (all over embroidery), which I mounted; other horses were given to Mr. Stuart and *every person* belonging to me. We moved along in slow procession toward the hill; and it was really a striking sight to behold the whole face of it, and of three or four adjacent hillocks, covered with *many many* thousands of people, Turks and Greeks, in strange parti-coloured habits; not one thing or one living creature resembling, in outward appearance, what I had been accustomed to see in Germany.

We were conducted to the *tefterdar's* custom-house, and brought into his apartment, where coffee, pipes, sherbet, sweetmeats, and *frankincense* were presented to us, by turns; and Prince Morusi, chief interpreter to the Porte (a well-conducted young man, son to a hospodar of Moldavia, and who will himself be one day sovereign of that country), made me a very polite compliment in the name of the Reis Effendi, who is the first of my colleagues. From thence we climbed up the hill, on the worst pavement, and through the most crooked lanes that can be imagined (but on sure-footed Turkish horses), and after a hundred turnings and windings, without seeing anything which deserved the name of a street, we at length arrived (and here ends my pompous tale) at my *castle*, allotted to the representative of the Crown of Great Britain.

Figure to yourself, my dear Anne, within a little farmer's yard, where no carriage can turn, a *bit* of a house, containing in all three *pigeon-holes* of rooms, the best of which is fourteen feet by twelve; the dining-room twelve by ten, and six feet in height; the bedchamber just three feet longer and two feet broader than my *tent*

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bed, and no other furniture anywhere but large sofas on the floor, with cushions (what say you to that?) of *cut velvet* on a *gold ground!* Never surely were gold and velvet so ridiculously employed!

But let me proceed. This bit of a castle is joined by a wooden bridge and covered passage to another hovel, LESS in every proportion, containing likewise three nutshells called rooms, where my chief attendants reside. I made as if all were entirely to my mind; and, in fact, I care little about the matter. I treated my conductors with coffee, pipes (their own), sherbet, &c., and sent them away contented. I then took a view of my domain, adjoining to my *palace*, and found eleven separate hovels, for my kitchen, for my confectioner, my washerwoman (brought from Bucharest), and a bit of a house for my dragoman Pisani, expected from Constantinople. I immediately set about improving my dwelling, and in four days I have got a new dining-room for *twenty people*, a scullery, confectionary, &c.; chairs, tables, bedsteads, kitchen furniture, and *every article* of housekeeping, *brought from Vienna*, are now in their places, and I, as well as every one of my people, find ourselves pretty comfortable, each in his *pigeon-hole*. I have a guard of Janissaries and Bulgarians, who lodge near my gate, and who accompany me everywhere. All my visits are paid on horseback, with a large retinue, and this forenoon the *Reis Effendi*, and the *Mollah de la Mecque*, and the *Metupscha Bashi*, were crammed together, and smoked their pipes (to repay my visit) in my *best nutshell*.

So much for diplomatic and tedious etiquette; the visits are all finished, and I hope we may be able to set about serious business in two or three days. The Turkish ministers are decent well-behaved men, and very civil in their way. The male Greeks and Turks of this town are a stout and handsome race of people.

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The first are clothed in all manner of colours, each man has two pistols and a large poignard at his girdle, and they look arrogant and surly. The Greeks wear long Asiatic habits, but no turban or arms *of any sort*. They would be respectful to us *if they dared*. The Greek women (not handsome, and ill dressed) stared at us as *Christians would do;* but the Turkish women, of whom I saw several hundreds, are dressed uniformly in a large wrapper of chocolate-coloured coarse stuff, which reaches from their chin to their toe, and makes all ages and figures nearly the same. On their heads they have an *impenetrable* veil of white linen, twisted round the head in three or four turns, leaving *no bit of skin* to be seen, but the eyes, and as much of the nose as is sufficient to breathe. These muffled dames sat in little groups, peeping from corners of balconies (every house has a balcony) or through half-opened doors or windows; not one man either in their company or near them. I thought I could perceive some little art in the fashion of the veil; all their eyes appeared lively and of a good colour. But I could not even conjecture where the word *handsome* could justly be applied.

I *did* remark, (and it gave me pleasure to see a little dash of coquetry bestowed upon a Christian) one *fine white plump* female hand, stretched out *bare* on the shoulder of another woman, as if by the *merest accident* in the world! I instantly searched for the eyes to which the hand belonged, and I thought they sparkled with soft complacency. Human nature is the same everywhere!

Now, my dear sisters, what do you not owe me for the preceding *Oriental description,* and all as true as the Gospel? I am a great man everywhere but in my own dwelling; and *there* I am a healthy good-humoured *

* The youthfulness of mind here alluded to by a diplomatist of *sixty*, will probably be held one of the chief charms of his correspondence.

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YOUNG fellow, laughing at all inconveniences, and fired with the ambition of doing good to *humanity*, with the full approbation of those who sent me hither. But such an embassy, in the dead of winter, with such roads, weather, and accommodations, to pacify empires in a Bulgarian hut, is not to be met with in history!

This Congress will be dull and slow, but if left to take its own course, I think its issue may be predicted. The Russians are in the height of their campaign on the Danube, but the Reis Effendi told me to-day that the Turks have gained some advantage, and will prevent the fortress of Ismail from falling into the Russian hands. *I am not yet without fear on that score;* but if the Russians are baffled there, the campaign will soon be at an end, and I trust we shall be able to bring the haughty dame of the north to wish for peace.

I have written all this letter without drawing breath; I shall add a few words to-morrow. Young Stuart is an excellent lad, and all my servants behave incomparably well. Adieu! good night, my dear sisters.

24th.

Barely time to tell you, my dear Anne, that all is well; that my dragoman, Pisani (a respectable old gentleman) is arrived from Constantinople with his son, and brings me several presents of wines, fruits, &c., from Sir Robert Ainslie, and a most obliging letter. I am now every way ready for business. My hearty love to all friends, and a most affectionate embrace to the sisterhood and aunt Bab.* You grow lazy as a correspondent, my dear Anne; give me all your news. God bless you.

R. M. K.

* The venerable lady thus repeatedly designated (grand-aunt to the writer), lived in full possession of her faculties, to the age of 100 years and six months.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Dec. 21st, 1790.

My Lord,

The arrival of Baron Herbert on the 19th (Marquis Lucchesini and Baron Haeften having preceded me on the road) has completed the assembly of the Congress; and when the tedious round of visits shall have been finished on all sides—which will still employ five or six days—the business with which we are charged shall be set on foot without delay.

In the hourly expectation of M. Pisani, his Majesty's chief dragoman at the Porte from Constantinople, the Prussian minister has been so obliging as to lend us his dragoman for the present, to assist us in the first visits and compliments of etiquette.

The Reis Effendi is a man in years, of a respectable figure and deportment. The second plenipotentiary (believed to be a favourite at the Porte) is shrewd and inquisitive; but I baffled his indiscreet curiosity by telling him that I should delay to converse with him on business till my interpreter should arrive. The third I shall see to-day, as they pay all their visits together.

[*Cypher.*]

A courier from Berlin has brought to the Prussian minister yesterday the first information of the unhappy misunderstanding which has taken place at the Hague, between the ministers of the three mediating powers and the Imperial ambassador. I hope that the wisdom and approved *loyauté* which distinguish the character of the Emperor, will soon bring back those affairs to the fair and friendly footing on which they stood.

What the Prussian minister has told me of the sentiments of his royal master on that subject, and the steps that monarch has taken at Vienna to procure a satis-

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factory explanation relative to the Netherlands, make me almost certain that the progress and issue of our negotiation here will depend in a great measure on the terms in which the Emperor shall reply to the King of Prussia's letter. Your Grace will have the goodness to favour me with immediate directions for my guidance, if the consequence of that unlucky incident, and of Count Mercy's haughty precipitation, should render necessary any alteration in the conduct prescribed to me at this Congress. I have found the Prussian minister exceedingly pressing for the positive promise of the guarantee of England to the future treaty. I have made him remark the great caution with which the King's ratification of the Convention of Reichenbach is expressed, and told him explicitly, that till the contents of the treaty shall be laid before the King, no promise of guarantee can be expected.

On one point I must request your Grace's speedy and precise instructions. The Prussian minister tells me, that in every step of the proceedings here, and in every paper to be signed, he is expressly ordered to insist on a perfect reciprocity with the King of Great Britain. He therefore requires that *every* document shall be made out *double* (as was the case at Teschen between France and Russia), and that the King of Prussia and his Majesty shall have the same alternative in title and signature, as in a common treaty of peace.

Is it his Majesty's pleasure that this demand (the first of the kind that a King of Prussia has ever had an opportunity of making at a Congress) be complied with or rejected?

I think it proper, at this stage of my mission, to acquaint your Grace, that I *cypher* and *decypher all myself*, and that the person who copies the above numbers has not the smallest knowledge of their contents.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, December 28th, 1790.

My Lord,

The hope which the Christian ministers of this Congress entertained of being able to hold the first general meeting of it this day, has been very unexpectedly frustrated by an ill-founded pretension which the Ottoman ministers set up, in regard to places of precedency in the assembly, notwithstanding that they themselves had declared, by letter to Mr. Herbert, at Bucharest, that they very readily agreed to waive, at this Congress, every species of ceremony, or etiquette, which might retard our business.

I will not trouble your Grace with the detail of the idle contestations into which they launched, touching the *form* of a room, and the seats of honour around it. The mediators were unanimously of opinion that the Turkish claims were groundless. But to all the arguments we employed, to bring them over to our opinion, they made but *one* reply; that their *religion* forbade them to comply with our decision. I see some reason to fear that this word *religion* will frequently be brought to serve as a cloak for ignorance or obstinacy.

The Turkish ministers, having the ceremonious circumstances of former treaties much more fresh in their memories than the essential stipulations of those treaties, immediately cited the Congress at Carlowitz; offering to change the oblong square of the actual place of assembly, into an oval form with four doors, &c., &c.

This would have caused a considerable delay in the opening of Congress; we therefore applied once more to the Austrian plenipotentiary, who, with great good temper, and the hearty desire of removing all trifling obstacles, suggested another arrangement of places, viz.: that the Turkish ministers should sit all on one side;

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the three mediating plenipotentiaries opposite to them, and he (Baron Herbert) below the *third* of the mediators. By this arrangement, the allied ministers are to be in the centre, having the Imperial ministers on their *right*, and the Ottomans on their *left* hand.

Our Mahometan colleagues have at length agreed to this proposal; and yet our first meeting is still unavoidably postponed till Saturday, the 1st of January. The Turks require that interval of time to prepare the number of copies of their full powers in the Turkish language, (which are in different terms for each of their three plenipotentiaries) and of the Latin translation of them, which must be exchanged at the commencement of the Congress. Such is the pretext they allege; but the real motive of procrastination is to have time for their *astrologers* to calculate, and mark out to them the happy hour for the commencement of the negotiation.

I dare say your Grace will agree with me in thinking that in the deplorable state of the Turkish forces, and when we are ready to restore whole provinces, and strong fortresses to their debilitated empire, the *earliest* hour of acceptance ought, in sound reason, to appear the most eligible. May the negotiation, when once set on foot, proceed with that degree of expedition which the plain sense of the Convention of Reichenbach facilitates to all parties.

I perceive that Marquis Lucchesini thinks himself entitled to unite, in certain cases, the office of mediator with the rights of a contracting party in the above-mentioned convention. This naturally gives him great weight with the Ottoman ministers. But, in as far as I can judge, from what he has told me of the language he holds to them, he has no thought of supporting them in any claim to make alterations in former commercial treaties with the Court of Vienna. He has, at the same

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time, declared to me that he will not agree to the insertion of any one article in the treaty of peace, which is not evidently deducible from the Reichenbach Convention.

Baron Herbert, again (as I informed your Grace from Bucharest) has orders to *insist* on the recapitulation and revival of all treaties between Austria and the Porte since the peace of Belgrade. To this I am persuaded that the Prussian minister will not consent.

On the other hand, I question much if Baron Herbert has it in his instructions to agree to make the strict neutrality of his sovereign, during the present war between Russia and the Porte, an express and positive stipulation of the definitive treaty. On these points, it appears to me that the greatest difficulties of the negotiation are likely to rest. Yet I am willing to hope that the general wish for final accommodation will suggest the means of removing them all in a little time.

I write the more freely on all these subjects, and without using cyphers, as this letter goes to Vienna by a Prussian courier, who will deliver it to Mr. Stratton, to be forwarded by a *safe* conveyance. I likewise enclose duplicates of the cyphered part of my two last letters; as this messenger may perhaps outstrip the tardy post which goes from hence to Germany.

As I have found the Ottomans incessantly reverting to the topic of his Majesty's guarantee, and ever expressing their surprise, as well as regret, at my not being authorised to promise them that sanction to the definitive treaty; I have thought it proper to put, at once, an end to all their false reasonings on that head, by desiring them to fix the following political maxim in their minds, that *mediation* and *guarantee* are quite different things; and that neither the one nor the other are ever granted by Great Britain but in consequence of a formal request. That in the Grand Vizier's letter of invitation (of which

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I have kept a copy) to Sir Robert Ainslie to assist at the Congress, mention is made of the Porte's request to obtain the King's *mediation*, but not a word is said of his *guarantee*. Consequently (and reserving to my sovereign his undoubted right of refusing such an onerous request *when made*) they themselves are at this moment asking of me an answer to an application which their Court never made to mine, till the subject was brought on the carpet four days ago, in their visit to *me*.

The Grand Vizier, (who appears to be an ignorant and presumptuous man) sent a few days ago, through the Reis Effendi, some very petulant questions to the Prussian minister here, implying a reproach of lukewarmness in the King of Prussia's not having already declared war against Russia.

Monsieur de Lucchesini showed me his answer, which was strong and indignant, as it ought to be. He told the Grand Vizier that his master had an army of above sixty thousand men, ready on the frontiers of the Russian dominions, to enforce the just terms of pacification which he had proposed to the Czarina; while he (the Grand Vizier) has not twenty thousand men now collected, to oppose the most dangerous attack actually carried on by the Russian general within a few days of his (the Grand Vizier's) head-quarters. The Prussian minister exhorted his Highness to make the most vigorous efforts to save Ismail; and to rest assured that the allies of the Porte would, at all times, show themselves equally faithful to their engagements, and active in their exertions. He repeated that his Prussian Majesty left the Porte at liberty to conclude a separate peace with Russia; but not otherwise than in strict conformity to the basis of the *status quo*.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, Dec. 30th, 1790.

My Lord,

The Turkish *astrologers* having discovered that one o'clock yesterday was a fortunate hour for opening the Congress, the Ottoman ministers made known to the mediators that they wished to meet us at that hour.

To this proposal we assented with great pleasure. But a sudden change of opinion in the mind of the Imperial Internuncio had like to have thrown us into a new perplexity and delay. He had repented of what *he himself* had suggested, and to which all parties had agreed, touching the arrangement of places in the Chamber of the Assembly. He applied to the mediating ministers to have their advice, in order to find out and determine a *third* mode of arrangement; giving us to understand that he must retract his former proposal, and might, perhaps, be forced to write to Vienna for orders.

We told him that it would be matter of great concern to our Courts to see the opening of the Congress postponed to so distant a period. But that, as we had acquainted them with our acceptance of his proposition, and had, at the same time, given due praise to his accommodating disposition, we must leave on him the blame of procrastination, and the choice of the measures which he thought it became him to pursue. After a few hours' reflection, the Imperial Internuncio gave us notice that he would meet us at the Congress, at the appointed hour.

It fortunately occurred to me, that as Baron Herbert was determined to proceed to business, there might be a way of giving to the place he was to occupy in the room, a greater degree of *distinction* than had been

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at first thought of. I therefore proposed to Messrs. Lucchesini and Haeften, that, by *reversing* the order of the places of the *mediating* ministers, and sitting *myself* next to Baron Herbert, whilst Monsieur de Haeften should be placed exactly opposite to the Reis Effendi, there would remain no doubt of the Emperor's minister being in possession of the most honourable place which could be devised; whilst the mediators preserved their right of being in the middle between the contracting parties.

To this plan my colleagues in the mediation gave their full approbation; and Baron Herbert has since expressed his complete satisfaction with the expedient I had suggested. I should not have troubled your grace with all these minute details, if the contracting parties had not thought them of *great* importance.*

I thought it the province of the King's minister to open the Congress. I did so, in the few phrases in the French language, of which I send a copy inclosed. They were translated into Turkish, and read to the Ottomans by the Dragoman of the Porte.

Speech of his Britannic Majesty's minister on opening the Congress, inclosed in the above:—

"Messieurs les Plénipotentiaires des Puissances contractantes, les ministres des cours médiatrices vous félicitent, par ma bouche, de l'ouverture de ce Congrès, auquel vos souverains respectifs ont formellement invité les notres, pour compléter l'ouvrage de la paix, dont les fondemens ont été heureusement jettés à Reichenbach en Silésie.

"Nous sentons combien il est honorable pour nous d'avoir été choisis par nos cours, pour y mettre la dernière main.

* The gravity with which official decorum obliges Sir R. M. Keith to narrate them, would only heighten his sense of their ludicrous insignificance.

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"Nous sommes trés convaincus, Messieurs, que conformément aux intentions bienfaisantes de vos Illustres Souverains, vous portez dans cette assemblée, la droiture parfaite, et la véritable esprit de conciliation.

"Vous êtes en droit d'attendre, et j'ose vous assurer, Messieurs, que vous trouverez de notre part, toute la bonne foi, et toute l'impartialité qui doivent constamment accompagner les fonctions respectables dont nos souverains nous ont chargés.

"Puisse la paix qui doit couronner nos travaux communs, rétablir la bonne harmonie entre les deux Empires limitrophes, sur les bases les plus solides, et les plus inaltérables!"

It was the work of three hours to read the originals of all the different full powers, with their translations from Turkish into Latin, and from Latin to Turkish, and occupied almost the whole remaining time of the meeting. I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

Extracts from such portions of Sir R. M. Keith's dispatches as are essential for the objects and progress of the negotiation.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, January 4th.

My Lord,

All preliminary forms being now adjusted, the real business of the Congress was entered upon in the following manner. The Austrian minister read aloud, in French, a speech of some length (which was immediately translated into Turkish by the united efforts of the dragoman of the Porte, and an Austrian interpreter,) and in that form read to the minister of the Sultan.

Your Grace will find annexed an exact copy of Baron Herbert's speech, containing no mention *whatever* of

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the Reichenbach Convention, but establishing the Emperor's *ultimatum* on the strict basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, and rendering the recapitulation and confirmation of all treaties between the two empires, previous to the war, a *sine quâ non* of the definitive treaty. To these overtures the Turks, after a short consultation among themselves, replied by the enclosed minute, of which I transmit an exact copy as delivered to Baron Herbert in *Turkish and French*, by the dragoman, with all the inaccuracies of the latter *idiom*, which he is to correct at leisure. The principal scope of this paper is to fix the basis of the treaty on the articles of the Convention of Reichenbach, and of the subsequent convention of armistice between the Grand Vizier and the Marshal de Saxe Cobourg. Baron Herbert received this paper as a preliminary proposition of negotiation, and promised to deliver an answer to it at the next meeting.

[*Cypher.*]

It appears to me that Baron Herbert (or, more properly Prince Kaunitz), has judged very *ill* in avoiding all mention of the Reichenbach Convention in the propositions now laid before the Congress. The words *sine quâ non*, and *ultimatum*, are likewise very peremptorily employed at the very *outset* by him, in presence of three mediators whose sovereigns are requested to guarantee the definitive treaty, and who, in all probability, will not extend that guarantee to any commercial treaties, and consequently will take no share in the *sine quâ non*.

The Prussian minister declares to me positively that his Court will not admit of the recapitulation of those treaties in the definitive one; while the request made to me at parting, last night, by Baron Herbert, was to assure my Court that he would not depart a *hair's breadth* from the propositions he had made to the Turkish ministers on Sunday.

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In the preceding part of the evening he had shown me a long account (sent to him from Bucharest) of the Russians having taken the important fortress of Ismail, by storm, on the 22nd of December. The loss on the side of the Russians is said to exceed four thousand killed, and of the Turks, more than double that number were slain. Should the fortress of Brailow, which is the next object of attack, fall into the Russian hands, it would reduce the Congress at *Sistovo* to the very precarious condition I mentioned to your Grace, in my letter of 14th November, from Vienna.

Sistovo, January 7th.

In the conference of Wednesday last, Baron Herbert produced a written answer to the paper delivered to him on the 2nd, by the Ottoman ministers, and began to read it by distinct paragraphs, each being immediately translated into Turkish.

He soon perceived that the Ottomans became uneasy from the moment that he had made mention of his unreserved admission of the stipulations of Reichenbach, and of the strict *status quo*, as the foundation of the whole negotiation. The Ottomans pressed very hard, and by redoubled instances, to have *their* papers accepted, as the basis of treaty, and (*to our astonishment*,) they gave us clearly to understand that the Porte not having been a party in the above-mentioned convention, *they* meant to ground the treaty *solely* on the *armistice* concluded between the Grand Vizier and the Marshal de Saxe Cobourg.

It was in vain that the mediating ministers represented to them with the *utmost calmness*, that their right and powers of intervention *here*, arose solely from the engagements contracted at Reichenbach; and that *we* had unanimously determined to bring back the Imperial minister to that convention, which he had

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omitted to mention in his first proposals. Baron Herbert took this opportunity of declaring that he had corrected his former inadvertence, in the most explicit terms. The Ottomans persisted in substituting *their* convention of armistice; and soon after retired to their separate rooms to discuss the matter among themselves.

In a little time they sent the dragoman of the Porte, to request a conference with the three mediators.

We joined them in their chamber, and (giving them unwearied attention) we passed two hours and a half in combating the most singular arguments that ever were alleged, which they strove to maintain after a tenfold refutation.

The whole secret of this untenable proposition, was to get rid of the phrase *status quo*, which happens not to be included in the instrument of armistice, and which they *pretended* not to understand. The Ottoman ministers comprehended us perfectly; but gave up nothing.

It appeared but too plainly, that as they negotiate under the terror of a despotic monarch, and an ignorant and harsh Grand Vizier, they think themselves bound to stand unshaken, on the worst ground possible, for a certain number of days. Their sole object is to convince their two masters that the full measure of obstinacy has been completed; and that the responsibility of accepting the fatal phrase *status quo*, and all its inevitable consequences, in regard to former treaties with the Court of Vienna, must be removed from off their shoulders, by orders from their superiors.

The only result of our conferences with the Turkish ministers was their declaring their determination to debate the treaty article by article; and at the same time their admission of the Convention of Reichenbach. This last *essential* circumstance having been inserted in the *protocol* of the conference, the meeting broke up, as the day was far advanced.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, January 6th, 1791.

"*Abilai Kol tesh*," means in the Turkish language, "I wish you a happy New Year;" and "*Bran fum grit*" is the phrase by which *we* Bulgarians express, "and many happy years to come."

I am sure, my dear sisters, it would give you great delight to receive a whole letter from me in *either* of those languages, which I have completely acquired; but I have not time to display my learning to-day, and I therefore hasten to assure you that I am (I *must* indulge you by giving you that pretty expression in Turkish) "*Miru zil pazu*,"—that is to say, as well as a *trout* in a clear stream; and so is my comrade Stuart, (a very amiable lad) and all my servants, and Janissaries, and Bulgarians, all *trouts*, every mother's son of them!

But as to the Turkish plenipotentiaries, their liveliness is that of an oyster, whose progressive pace is *certain*, though hardly discernible.

Ismet Bey, Mollah de la Mecque, my *second* Ottoman colleague, is reckoned a bit of a wag, and indeed he speaks his mother tongue with great volubility; decorating every phrase with the accompaniment of a whiff of tobacco; but I think it savours a little of his theological education, and I soon *smoked* him to be one of the *Ulema*, or doctors of the college of civil law. The Reis Effendi, Abdallah, is an honest quiet gentleman, who knows more than he chooses to tell; because, (between you and me) he stands a little in awe of his inferior, that same Mollah de la Mecque, who is shrewdly suspected of being a favourite *behind the curtain*. As to "*Durri Renuve Evvel*," my third comrade, he is reckoned monstrously deep, and I daresay he is; for

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since we have drawn him at the Congress, we have got but one little bucket of eloquence *up*—but it was strong, clear, and *tasty*. Judge, my dear Anne. "*Rezub delo guralnu*," "lay a little wood on the fire"—which my diplomatic sagacity interpreted to signify "Speak up to him,"—"Give him the argument *piping hot*, but do it courteously."

What a charm it is for you, my dear sisters, to have a brother, sitting on a Bulgarian hill, and cross-legged on a gold cushion, to investigate in this sapient manner, the deepest *arcana of state;* in the very bosom of Mussulman faith, and Saracen profundity! I could pass my life in this colloquial gaiety, and interchange of illumination, if it were not that my dwelling is too narrow for my fat carcase; and that our Excellencies are frequently in want of *white bread*, and carrots, and turnips, which I love exceedingly. We bring the bread from Wallachia, and the garden stuff from Transylvania, an *hundred leagues off*, which is rather troublesome!

But I have not told you, my dear Anne, why I write you this hasty scrawl one post sooner than I intended. Why, because I have the mortification of knowing that one of my best lucubrations, written to the sisterhood from Czernetz in Wallachia, on the 2nd of December, has been employed to light some Austrian corporal's pipe—as it never reached Stratton at Vienna. My second motive arises from *your* epistle to Stratton having been sent to *me* here, by mistake, and my having taken the liberty to peruse it. Now, as you seem to give me little credit for punctuality (though I have written you *six* letters since the 16th of November), I am happy to answer that epistle in Stratton's place, till I send it back to him; when your correspondence may be pursued with vigour.

You would scold me if I wrote from Turkey without

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giving you the sequel of my observations upon the Turkish women. I have now seen some of these dear creatures every day for these three weeks, and as they are all similarly clothed in long black gowns, and all veiled in an uniform manner, I have attained to great perfection in judging of their *beauty;* by the same exact rule that a Scotch servant lass judges of the value of a *sack of coals*—viz.: whether it be crammed, or "*maggit.*"* They have yellow boots on; that I have discovered by one of those Incognitas falling into the kennel t'other day, very obligingly, and by the contraction (involuntary of course) of her right heel, she did me the favour of showing me one inch of a yellow boot. If I could have seen her face, through veil and mud, I am sure it was crimsoned with blushes. I turned aside with a *modest urbanity;* and I have the comfort of thinking that neither my Mehmandar, nor Janissaries, nor that Christian infidel Stuart (who surrounded me), saw the shame of that sweet Mahometan—*coal-sack!*

But I must have done, and hasten to debate a point of geography; to ascertain, with my chum the *Mollah,* the limits of certain provinces of the Ottoman empire. He is a bright luminary in geography, for he asked me t'other day (this literally true), and in presence of all his colleagues—"If Spain is not in Africa?"

"*Binko-puz-myzandra:*" love to all cronies; and cordial affection to the sisterhood. Heaven guard you all. My next shall be in modern Greek, which I begin to chatter very prettily.

* A cant Edinburgh expression, for one that had been pilfered from in the carriage.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, Jan. 17th, 1790.

I HAVE now passed a month at Sistovo, my dear Anne, in most *perfect health*, and so has every Christian belonging to the four missions. This will prove to you, my dear sisters, what a healthful climate this is. The situation is as fine as can be imagined, and the town (scattered on the side of three or four small hills, and overlooking the noble Danube) would make one of the finest pictures possible. But, alas! I can find no painter capable of drawing such a landscape,* though I have ransacked all Bucharest for such an one. My confectioner has made a faithful though *coarse* drawing of my dwelling-house, and all its adjacent hovels. He shall do the same of the ministers' houses, and the sight of them, and their description, will amuse us all in a winter's evening.†

The four missions of Christians live very amicably and hospitably together. I beat them all *hollow* in point of table, wines, and confectionery. I have twice as many servants as any other minister, and my people are active and clever in their professions. We have no intercourse with our Mussulman colleagues but at the conferences, when they always treat us with coffee, sweetmeats, &c. They lead a sad dull life among themselves.

As to the inhabitants of Sistovo, we meet them in the street, and see them sitting at their shops; they take no more notice of us than of so many stones. They sometimes mutter between their teeth *Giaour* (which signifies dog), but none of them dares to be any way rude. The Greeks bow respectfully to us, and put their hands to

* One was ultimately found, for a picture fully answering the above description is preserved in Sir R. M. Keith's family.

† These sketches are likewise extant.

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their hearts; but all in private, and silently, for fear of their Turkish tyrants. The Prussian minister was coming to my house yesterday with all his guards and servants. A little Turkish girl, of eight or nine years old, stepped from her mother's side to have the pleasure of calling his excellency *Giaour* to his face, and aloud. The Janissaries reproved Miss for her indiscreet zeal; the minister only laughed, as you may believe. I mention this to show what blind prejudice in religion will do. The Turks (who are beaten everywhere) literally believe themselves to be of a class of beings infinitely superior to Christians!

I told you in my last, my dear Anne, about the Turkish women. I have not a word to add; for more than one fist of female flesh belonging to Mahomet, saw I never. My chum Stuart met two ladies with their attendants t'other day; their ladyships were up to the chin in yellow bags, instead of black, that was all the difference!

We have a Pasha of two tails here for the police of the town; he is an Albanian, a stout-looking determined blade. He does his business well; we hear of no quarrels. The Austrian prisoners are now returning home; eighteen officers, and between six and seven hundred men are the whole. They are exchanged at Ruschuk, about thirty English miles from hence.

You now expect, my dear sisters, that I should give you some notion of the progress of our business. It has been at a stand these eight days; the Turks waiting for fresh orders from Constantinople. They all know that they have but *one* plain path to pursue; yet it is hard work with these obstinate people to make them take the first essential step in it, though manifestly for their *own good*. They are now in labour of one *sensible proposition;* we mediators are good midwives; we will bring it safe into the world in a few days, and then all

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the rest will be smooth turf to our journey's end. I hope to send my definitive messenger to England before Sunday next; and at his return I shall be relieved from this singular exile. The Turks (according to custom) make a handsome allowance to every minister who negotiates in their country. This will do more than defray my expenses here, but I have not the smallest desire to prolong the enjoyment of their subsidy; and I promise you I shall *run away* from it, the instant I can do so with propriety. I hope, my dear sisters, to make this singular and outlandish job of work, a very satisfactory one to all parties. I will maintain my just claim to the hearty approbation of all my superiors, and from *that* only do I look for a reward. Diamond boxes, and Turkish piastres have less hold on me than perhaps on any other man; my *native* and *hereditary* poverty is my *pride*. How I shall rejoice when I get back again to old Vienna!

Our *only* lady, Madame Herbert, is gone to Bucharest for a few weeks to see her children. A sad loss to us; not that she is superabundantly attractive, but that we now live and dine together like monks in a refectory. A female cheek is a thing we shall not see till Madame Herbert returns to us. All my Vienna friends, young and old, are well, and bid us hasten back to them. Lord Elgin is much liked; I hear his manners and talents much commended. Arbuthnot wrote to me that he would be in Paris in February.

My Bulgarian newsmongers predict *sad mischief* in France in a little time. That nation must pass through the FIERY FURNACE to be purified back to its original standard. Adieu my trusty friend,

Yours in every sense,

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, January 11th, 1791.

I AM sorry to acquaint your Grace that the meeting of Congress, yesterday, proved by no means satisfactory, as the Ottoman ministers persisted (whether for the purpose of giving time for first instructions, or from Mahometan pertinacity) in refusing to make a formal avowal of their general acceptance of the phrase *status quo*; though they did not seem inclined to run the risk of entirely rejecting it, a risk of which the fatal and inevitable consequences had been frequently held up to them by the mediators.

They began the conference by asking the Austrian minister in what manner he thought himself entitled to extend the meaning and application of the term, beyond the specific stipulations of the Reichenbach Convention? Baron Herbert gave them a distinct answer, by saying that as he had, in his sovereign's name, solemnly engaged to fulfil every article which was for the advantage of the Ottoman Porte, he had, at the same time, established the Emperor's right to the full completion of the *status quo* on their side towards him.

They then, and perhaps with the hope of being able to vary the ground of litigation, addressed me to know my definition of *status quo*. I answered that the definition given by Marquis Lucchesini in a preceding conference, contained the sentiments of all the mediators. That Baron Haeften and I had already, both of us, confirmed it, and that it was losing time to put questions which had already been explicitly answered. They then asked me if the triple mediation had not been requested in order to establish a permanent peace.

To this I answered that I could not suppose the Ottoman ministers had sufficiently reflected on the

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nature of such an interrogation; or that they could possibly address it to the ministers of three such respectable Courts. That as they had seen my full powers, and heard my address to all parties, at the opening of the Congress, they must suppress a question which required and deserved no answer. Each of my colleagues in the mediation, said a few words to the same effect.

The Ottomans now attempted to enter into a wide field of discussion, by asking Baron Herbert what was his definition of the word *peace*? He replied that he came here to make the peace of *Sistovo*, and not to launch out into a dissertation on general terms which all parties understood alike. The Turkish ministers (after a little deliberation) said they must retire into their own chamber, where we joined them soon after with a firm determination to speak in a very plain, though temperate manner, to these ministers, and to bring them to listen to reason, and to acknowledge the obligations of the convention which it was impossible for them to elude. They again reverted to their futile arguments respecting the convention of armistice; but we cut the matter short by showing them their own words, by which they acknowledge, in that identical paper, "que la convention de Reichenbach est *approuvée et acceptée par la Sublime Porte.*"

They had no longer one foot of solid ground to stand upon, yet they would not recede. We then concerted with Marquis Lucchesini, that he should speak openly to them as the representative of a contracting party at *Reichenbach*, and of a monarch to whom the Turks owed the manifold and most important advantages which had already accrued to their empire by the cessation of hostilities, and the recovery of very extensive territories, which were now to be confirmed to the Porte by the peace.

The Prussian minister did this in a very strong

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manner; representing not only the great benefits which the King, his master, and his allies, had already procured for them, but recommending to the Ottomans to set a *proper value* on such services, and to reflect on the imminent danger of releasing the Court of Vienna from the engagements contracted at Reichenbach, by an obstinate rejection of that half of the *status quo*, to which the Imperial minister had very justly laid claim. To this language they did not attempt to offer a reply. But being still unwilling to pronounce an acquiescence in its justice, they changed their ground, and asked if we would not enter into a *revision* of each of the treaties which Baron Herbert was so desirous to have confirmed by the Porte.

[This proposal having (on the grounds already stated, of ignorance of their tenor on the part of Britain, and positive refusal to guarantee them on the part of Prussia) been decidedly negatived, Sir R. Keith goes on to mention a possible cause of misunderstanding among his *civilized* colleagues.—Ed.]

I am now to give your Grace an account of what has been communicated to me by the Prussian minister, which will probably throw some light on the question put to us by the Turks toward the close of our conference with them. On the 8th instant (after the breaking up of the Congress) Baron Herbert said to him *alone*, that he had paid particular attention to the last phrase of *his* definition of *status quo*, and knew to what he alluded in saying, there might be something in the Imperial treaties with the Porte, which would, *perhaps*, prove contradictory to the sense of the Reichenbach Convention. He then read to the Marquis, and gave him in writing the 4th article of a Turkish *Sened* (of which I send your Grace a copy), begging that minister if it should, in his judgment, seem repugnant to the stability of peace, to make no direct opposition to it

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here, but leave the point to be amicably adjusted afterwards by their respective Courts. The Marquis said in return, that the article Baron H. had now put into his hand was entirely *new* to him. That it had struck him at first sight as being an unprecedented establishment of a *right of reprisals by the sword*, and at the will of the Court of Vienna; which right, if left to subsist, would annul all the duties and functions of a guarantee. He therefore would not promise not to deliver in the Congress an opinion to that effect, if the Ottomans should ever address him on the subject. Being willing, however, to obviate the most distant cause of misunderstanding, he would immediately refer the matter to the determination of his sovereign.

As this affair has been thus imparted to me, and will probably become matter of *very serious discussion*, I think it my indispensable duty to lay it fully before your Grace; making it my earnest request to be favoured with early and explicit instructions for my guidance, in relation to what I fear may prove a stumbling-block in the way of the object I have it so ardently at heart to promote.

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND * TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, Jan. 11th, 1791.

My Dear Sir,

I have received yours from Temeswaer, giving an account of what passed between you and Monsieur Herbert; and the ministers in England will draw auspicious conclusions from it as to your approaching negotiation at Sistova. I have not yet seen any communication of the treaties which we are expected to guarantee, either to England or to this Republic.

* His Majesty's Plenipotentiary at the Hague, through whom the dispatches passed.

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That point, and the questions dependent on it, may occasion some little delay; but I am sure that you may rely on the dispatch of the King's ministers,* and that not an hour will be lost on their part towards enabling you to bring your important undertaking to the most immediate conclusion. They cannot wish to bury your talents in Sistovo, one hour longer than is necessary. And yet I think I see, through the cloud of impending circumstances, some matters which may protract the negotiation longer than will be quite agreeable to you.

Is it impossible to take some precaution for the security of the province of Wallachia, upon its being evacuated by the Austrian troops, in the event of the Russian war continuing? Every possible exertion is using to bring that war also to a conclusion, upon the principle of the strict *status quo*.

This same Russian story is the only one which now materially occupies us; because the business of Sistovo being in such *good hands for all parties*, is *considered as settled*. Great activity is exciting, and will be excited, as to the other; and the justice of our object, as well as its wisdom is such, that I have great hopes as to the final result.

Other powers are also disposed to support the disinterested principle on which we act; and I am not without hopes that the Emperor will feel that this is an occasion on which he may fix and rivet the honourable friendship of England, and also the establishment of a long, complete, and general pacification.

It is with great concern for your personal comforts that I address this to you at Sistovo, where I suspect your accommodations are not much better than those of a village in the interior of Africa. But, with all

* In whose confidence, the writer then stood uncommonly high.

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possible good wishes for your speedy deliverance from a campaign (the *désagrémens* of which, however, will be compensated by its *laurels*) I must here conclude; and you will forgive my writing so illegibly when I add, that I have ONLY had four couriers from England in the last twenty-four hours!

Believe me ever, my dear Sir,
Most sincerely and faithfully yours,
AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, January 25th, 1790.

MY LORD,

I am heartily sorry to be obliged to acquaint your Grace, that to this hour, the most earnest representations of the mediating ministers, enforced by the pressing remonstrances of the plenipotentiary of Prussia, (the only ally of this empire,) have not got the better of that spirit of procrastination which our Turkish colleagues have betrayed ever since the opening of the Congress.

I had the honour to inform your Grace by last post, that they had positively fixed Monday the 24th for the renewal of the conferences. The Reis Effendi had been slightly indisposed with a cold in the end of last week, but not in such a manner as to prevent his meeting us on the day appointed.

It was therefore matter of surprise and regret to us, to receive intimation from that minister yesterday morning, (an hour before the Congress should have met) that his indisposition was augmented, and that he was sorry he could not pursue the negotiation till to-morrow, the 26th. We immediately concluded this to be a flimsy pretext, and the delay a new tergiversation on the part of the Turks. But having discovered that

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a Tartar courier had arrived from Constantinople early in the morning of yesterday, we were indulgent enough to suppose that, perhaps, they had received new and decisive instructions; and that, as the tenor of them must alter their language and manners, they required some time to study their parts. We conjectured that the Ottomans would employ all their art in gradually relinquishing their untenable ground, and yielding to reason, without appearing to sacrifice any part of that *supposed dignity* which they affect to maintain in everything; but which, (in the opinion of every sensible man,) lends but a very thin cloak to ignorance and obstinacy. We had been too kind to them in seeking to discover even a tolerable apology for their conduct. Our dragoman went to the Reis Effendi this morning to inquire after his *health*, and to mention our firm reliance on his promise to hold a conference *to-morrow*. He gave for answer that he was not yet in a state of health to think of meeting us to-morrow; but that he hoped to have that satisfaction on Thursday next. Even this last intimation was not given in a tone of fixed resolution. I wrote this morning to Marquis Lucchesini (the mediating ministers having come to an agreement yesterday not to allow the Turks to *shuffle* any longer,) to express to him my indignant feelings at such behaviour. He shares them with me, and immediately sent his dragoman to the Reis Effendi, to *insist* upon a meeting. That minister (who has in fact been indisposed, though not to that degree as to justify his conduct towards the mediators) has promised to meet us on *Thursday*. If he should not, your Grace may be assured that the three mediating ministers will, without further delay, make a *joint and formal* remonstrance to the Ottomans, in terms becoming the real dignity of the sovereigns they have the honour to serve.

R. M. K.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistove, January 24th, 1790.

I AM sending a messenger to England, my dear Anne, and though I have professional scribbling on my hands more than I can set my face to—he shall carry the sisterhood a few cordial lines, with the assurances of my perfect health, and great anxiety to hasten the conclusion of this tiresome business. If Mahomet has commanded his sectaries to be more obstinate than *mules*, he is obeyed to the letter of his law! These bearded negotiators have been quibbling for these five weeks, like Old Bailey solicitors. They have a zig-zag kind of logic, which it plagues common sense to be obliged to *sweep away* from all its creeks and corners; but I think we have got their worships now so completely at a *non-plus*, that in the conference to which I am just now going, they must condescend (like coy damsels) to accept of a thousand advantages which we have been thrusting into their bosoms ever since we came to Sistovo.

There is a fatality attends this un-Christian congress! Every wheel of it stops by turns. The Reis Effendi has sent to tell us that an *indisposition* prevents him from meeting us in Congress until Wednesday. I know he has had a cold, but this has much the air of a sham paroxysm. I am certain they received this morning fresh orders by a Tartar courier from Constantinople. I trust that they are now studying a more *rational* part they have to act; but with these deep negotiators *reason* is as yet *hors de combat*. Well! if that be their motive for procrastination, I will forgive them, for this last time. I must delay my messenger till Friday, but not longer. Adieu then for a day or two, my dear Anne. This letter *shall* go with the messenger; it will travel both

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more surely and expeditiously. I embrace the sisterhood and aunt Bab most kindly.

January 28.

The Turks swallowed yesterday (*par miracle,*) a large bolus of common sense and prudence, which we mediators prescribed to them; nay, even in a manner thrust down their throats. They made horrid wry faces, but no matter; it will do them and theirs a world of good. My messenger will gallop away to-morrow morning, and on his return I trust that I shall be soon un-Mussulmanised, and sent back to fatten amongst the honest Germans. I have not, my dear Anne, a finger to write with; they are all worn down to the size of thumbs by incessant scribbling. But I am well, hearty, and heartily tired of Turkish coffee, Turkish conversation, tobacco, rose water, and frankincense. *Nota Bene,* I am, by conviction, a *better Christian* than ever. God bless you all.

R. M. K.

TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS BY THE MESSENGER LAUZUN.

Sistovo, Jan. 28*th.*

My Lord,

The conference was opened yesterday morning, by Baron Herbert's reading to the assembly a notification of the Emperor's having appointed Count Francis Esterhazy his second *Imperial* plenipotentary at this Congress. That gentleman is supposed to be on the road from Vienna, but it is declared that the prosecution of the negotiation is to suffer no *delay* in consequence.

The Turkish plenipotentaries had come down to the Congress at a late hour; having, as we afterwards learned, spent the forenoon in determining the precise measure of the condescending step they would vouchsafe to make without humbling themselves so far as to meet

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their adverse party on level ground. This appeared by a written proposition which the Reis Effendi prefaced by many futile professions of a conciliatory disposition on the part of the Sublime Porte. He then read his paper containing an offer of *conditional acceptance* of the *status quo*, provided that other points should be *previously* adjusted to the satisfaction of the Porte.

[Here follow stipulations of a private nature between Turkey and Austria, not comprehended in the proposed treaty, and consequently not legitimate subjects of litigation, pending its discussion, and as such again repudiated by the Austrian plenipotentary.—Ed.]

The Turks tried, during more than an hour, to turn and twist their *conditional* proposal into every possible shape short of the plain adoption of the basis held out to them. They called their *demands*, wishes, desires, suggestions, &c., and at each time that the mediators urged the necessity of beginning, by fixing the *foundation* stone of our building, before they attempted to rear a superstructure—the Ottomans constantly drew back, and said they wondered that having done *so much*, and shown every sort of facility, more could be required of them till their very reasonable wishes were gratified.

Baron Herbert in return (for he, too, delights in a parade of words) boasted of his *tractability* and *pliability* whenever he had an inch of liberty left him. He, however, read a written paper, proving that he was deprived of all discretionary power whatever.

The mediators, being heartily tired of turning round in the same mill for five long weeks, I adddressed those ministers who had shown themselves such great proficients in the complimentary art. I told them, in the name of the three mediators, that I congratulated both the contracting parties on what *they termed* their reciprocal complaisance; though *we* could hitherto perceive no visible effect of that accommodating spirit. That we

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conceived it to be high time for the principal parties to reflect on what was *due* to so respectable a mediation, and to set us in possession of the full exercise of our functions, by a mutual and unreserved acceptance of the basis of the *status quo*, as settled at *Reichenbach*. That in virtue of that sole act the mediating ministers had been sent to Sistovo, and that having that rule to walk by, they could take no share in any proposition distant a hair's breadth from it on one side or the other. The Turks, though pressed so hard (Marquis Lucchesini and the Dutch minister confirming what I had said in terms of equal import and energy), were still resolved not to give way; and after cavilling for half an hour longer, hinted that they wished to put off the sequel of this debate till another conference. But seeing that all three ministers were ready to protest against such a palpable and unjustifiable procrastination, they changed their purpose, and told us they must withdraw into their private chamber to say their prayers.

The mediators (after their departure) told the Imperial minister that they must likewise hold a conference in their separate apartment. Marquis Lucchesini, Baron Haeften, and I, had determined (on the preceding day) to support the dignity of our sovereigns by making *an absolute stand* at this stage of the business, and forcing the Turks to declare, before they left the house, whether they would expressly accept, or definitively reject the principle of the strict *status quo*. We had drawn up two remonstrances to that effect, one (the most stringent) giving notice that the intervention of the mediating powers must remain *suspended*, in case a milder but equally cogent proposal should fail of its effect. These measures, on our part, were kept in reserve for the last extremity, and happily we were not driven to that extremity. It would be giving your lordship much unnecessary trouble to recapitulate all the subterfuges

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to which the Turks had recourse, in several messages sent to us (the mediators) by their principal dragoman. We remained unshaken in our declared purpose of *requiring* a satisfactory explanation. They then proposed to have another conference in four days after, and held out hopes of their probable acquiescence. This being refused, they sent to tell us that the heavenly constellations were in adverse aspect, and they must not proceed under such a danger. This motive being treated with the derision it deserved, their principal dragoman was employed no more as their messenger, but they had recourse to our interpreter, and through him, they varied their insinuations again and again.

At length, my lord, after carrying on their fruitless attempts for almost two hours, and always receiving from us the same firm requisition of an explicit answer, they desired us to return to our chamber of general assembly, where they joined us. There, with much reluctance, but in plain unequivocal terms, they at length pronounced that irrevocable acceptance of the *status quo, strict* and *unreserved,* of which your Grace will find the precise terms in the annexed copy extracted from the protocol of Congress.

After this, we wished them joy of their having taken possession of safe and honourable ground. At their request an end was put to the conference, and Monday, the 31st, was appointed for our next meeting.

Thus, my lord, we flatter ourselves that all essential obstacles are removed, and that we shall be able to proceed with a competent degree of expedition in settling every article of the definitive treaty.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

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[*By the same messenger Lauzun.—Separate and Confidential.*]

My Lord, *Sistovo, January 28th, 1791.*

In several long and very interesting conversations I have had with Marquis Lucchesini, in the last four days, there have occurred many particulars not unworthy of your Grace's notice, and I think it proper to make these the subject of a separate letter.

He is commanded by his sovereign to represent in the most urgent terms, to the Grand Signor on the one hand, and the Grand Vizier on the other, the absolute *necessity* of straining every nerve to collect, early in the spring, the whole force of the Ottoman empire, to act offensively against Russia. He is charged to tell them very frankly, that without the moral certainty that such vigorous efforts shall be made on their side, his Prussian Majesty will think it unadvisable to draw the sword against Russia.

The Turks were exceedingly alarmed at learning that the King of Prussia had agreed to their making a *separate* peace with the Russians, *without his mediation.* This they ignorantly construed to be a *total dereliction of their interests* in that quarter. Monsieur Lucchesini is ordered to clear up that matter to their satisfaction, and to assure them, that if Russia should, during the present Congress, open a pacific negotiation with them, on admissible terms, he (Lucchesini) will undertake to direct that negotiation *from hence.* But if the Russian overtures should not be made till after the conclusion of the Sistovo Congress, he desires the Grand Vizier to fix a place of negotiation at no great distance from hence, and offers to draw nigh to it, in order to assist them with his counsel.

The second commission intrusted to him, is to take place in case the Turkish war with Russia *must* be

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prolonged, and that Prussia is to become an active party in it. In that event, M. Lucchesini is to procure a meeting with the Vizier's Kyaja Bey (a man of talents), and concert with him a plan for the ensuing campaign. My colleague has little doubt that he shall be able, if necessary, to get his master's plan for it completely adopted by the Turks; and he has orders, in case of a rupture with Russia, to turn that agreement into the form of a reciprocal convention, and as such, to *sign and seal it*. M. Lucchesini, in the meantime, directs all the Prussian negotiations at Constantinople; and will retard, or forward the Polish treaty there, according as it appears to him to counteract or coincide with his sovereign's views.

Having said so much of the wide scope of this gentleman's present and future projects, it may be expected that I should give an opinion of his talents for the execution of them. I profess that I think his abilities great, and know that his application is *intense* and *unwearied*. Perhaps he undertakes *too much*, and is often forced to proceed too rapidly. He has not, during a long residence in Germany, been able to divest himself entirely of that species of subtlety which is ascribed to his Italian countrymen, but which I look upon as a drawback on his parts.

His greatest foible would be (if not carefully checked) a heat of temper, with a propensity to assume an overbearing tone; yet he has in general discernment enough to adapt his tone pretty nearly to the character of the person whom he addresses. His influence with the Turks would be greater, if his extreme caution not to hurt the feelings of his master's allies, did not deprive the good advice he gives them of that *energy* which would enforce conviction. But his intentions appear to me to be good; and I can perceive that he has ambition enough to look *very high*; though he still

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protests to me, that no temptation shall lead him to accept a place in the ministry at Berlin. He has a private cypher with the King, which he often uses, and I believe with some freedom.

He certainly had a great share in opening the King of Prussia's eyes to the dangerous consequences of Count Hertzberg's schemes of *partition, exchange,* and *depredation,* which were so strongly agitated last spring. As Count Hertzberg knows this, his enmity to Lucchesini is but very thinly veiled over. He, on the other hand, lays at Monsieur Hertzberg's door all the false steps which he was *driven* to take at the commencement of his mission to Warsaw, so that their animosity is reciprocal, and the two ministers draw different ways whenever their interests clash. But I may venture to assure your Grace, that in all matters of negotiation (especially in this quarter of the world) Lucchesini's preponderance is, at this moment, unquestionable. Count Hertzberg's antipathy to the words *status quo,* is very natural, as they render the pen of a dashing projector an useless weapon. He was much disappointed at finding that Austria had relinquished all ideas of acquisition or exchange at the expense of the Turks, as he had charged Lucchesini with a progressive scale of equivalent demands to be set up by Prussia.

I should not have troubled your Grace with these details, had they not related to a Court with which his Majesty stands in the most intimate connexion, and to a person who may one day act a conspicuous part there.

I must say a few words in respect to my colleague, Baron Herbert. He is a *little man,* and has been employing little underhand means to ingratiate himself with the Turks, by insinuating that *he* never wishes to *hurry* them in the negotiation, and that, perhaps, they have found the mediators more hard to deal with than himself, though their *adverse* party. The Baron shall

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not go without a salutary lesson, if he continues to pursue crooked paths.

I imagine that I have the reputation of being the warm instigator to *expedition*. But this is a matter of indifference to me, as I curry favour with neither party, but endeavour to fulfil my instructions with temper, as well as impartiality; and cannot awaken in my own breast the smallest spark of affection for the Turkish *piastres*. I trust that the approbation of my sovereign, and that of his confidential servants, will crown my ambition, and prove the best reward for the singular inconveniences and fatigues of a winter campaign in politics, in this inhospitable country of Bulgaria, where probably a meeting of negotiators was never assembled before, nor will be hereafter.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. S. This letter being written before the conference of to-day, it is therefore a justice I owe to Marquis Lucchesini, to assure your Grace that his conduct and language, when it became necessary to *oblige* the Turks (for their own sake) to adopt the *status quo*, were as open and forcible as we could possibly wish.

[Hitherto, and while yet, alas! upon little more than the threshold of eight months' harassing litigation, now on one side, and now on the other—the dispatches have been given at some length, and with only unimportant omissions; as curious specimens, not often presented to the public, of an Ottoman diplomacy, which even in Turkey must soon become obsolete. Henceforward, while that sense of justice towards himself, so amiably displayed in Sir R. M. Keith's postscript towards another, must dictate such an enumeration of endless chicane and subterfuges, as almost to earn for the mediators the honours of martyrdom—compassion for

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the feelings, as well as patience of the reader, must restrict the details to such as are inevitable for the elucidation of the negotiation itself, or the characters of the contracting parties. And if in the early stages of the former, Turkish prejudice and obstinacy have been found to retard the progress of the mediators, it is to be feared (for the honour of Christendom and civilisation) that the impediments cast in the way of its successful termination, by the duplicity and tergiversation of the Austrian cabinet, far exceeded in number, as well as in well-nigh fatal influence on the ultimate issue of the negotiation, those of the timid slaves of Ottoman despotism. Nay it is difficult to rise from the painful perusal of "every step of this," as Sir R. M. Keith in a familiar letter justly styles it, "unchristian Congress," without insensibly adopting the side even of Turkish wrongheadness, when evidently overborne by Austrian subterfuge and want of faith. The two can never, perhaps, be more forcibly placed in juxta-position than in the following extracts.—Ed.]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Feb. 1st, 1791.

My Lord,

Having dispatched a letter to England in the night of the 18th of January, with the account of the reciprocal and unreserved adoption by both contracting parties of the Reichenbach Convention, I have only to report to your Grace, by this post, what passed yesterday in the seventh conference, where a progress was made by each of the parties presenting a separate draught of such a preliminary act as they wished to have deposited in the hands of the mediating ministers.

[In this conference, the predominance of the *chicane* alluded to, manifested itself in the cavil of the Austrian

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minister, at the absence of a distinct specification by *name* of all the previous treaties in existence with the Porte; while the Turks (for the first time on tenable ground) very naturally insisted that the phrase "*all Treaties, Firmans, &c.,*" sufficiently included the desired specification. This view was taken, but ineffectually, by *all* the mediators. The conference being adjourned in consequence, Turkish absurdity regained the ascendant as follows.—Ed.]

Since writing the above, the Ottoman ministers have this moment acquainted me that Wednesday (*the last Wednesday of the moon*) is a *fatal day*, and that no good Mussulman can think of putting his signature to an act of moment on such a day. To corroborate this forcible argument, the Mollah de la Mecque (the Machiavel of the mission) has done me the honour to quote to me an example, which he is *sure must* carry conviction; that the unfortunate Grand Vizier, Hamid Halil, was prevailed on to accept of the Viziriat on an *ominous Wednesday*, and had his head (as might have been foreseen) cut off, on just such *another*. To such cogent reasoning your Grace will do me the justice to believe me incapable of turning a deaf ear, and the conference was postponed till *Thursday* next.

[In the conference thus adjourned, it was the turn of the Prussian minister to throw down the apple of discord by reading a written paper, formally objecting to the terms of the Austrian plenipotentiary's draft of the preliminaries; a step which well nigh menaced a premature suspension of the Congress.—Ed.]

The Imperial minister seemed a good deal *ruffled* by the contents of this paper, and the arguments which accompanied it. He perused the declaration, and then entered into a long and *tart* reply. Baron Herbert was so far off his guard as to say that a determined rejection on the part of the Prussian minister of his own declara-

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tion would *suspend the Congress*. He desired Monsieur Lucchesini to put on paper what he had before *said* in contradiction to it. The Prussian minister professed his readiness to do so, but stipulated for having the *demand* also made *in writing*.

Baron Herbert, ever ready to indulge his *Cacoethes scribendi*, employed a considerable time in putting to paper his ill-digested thoughts, and delivered them (in the inclosed form C.) to the Prussian minister. Marquis Lucchesini withdrew into a separate room to prepare his rejoinder; and the Ottoman ministers (who had taken little share in the debate) retired to their own chamber to say their prayers.

There appearing, on the resumption of the conference, great danger of our seeing the prolongation of a very tedious, unnecessary, and unsuitable war of the pen, I seized the first pause of litigation to strive to put an end to it.

I had observed, from the beginning of this dispute, that Baron Herbert's strenuous endeavours to lessen the weight of the Reichenbach Convention and his present preposterous attempt to establish a *second and separate* basis for the treaty of Sistovo, had furnished just cause for the resistance of the Prussian minister, and for that misunderstanding which was likely to be drawn to great length.

I therefore addressed myself *aloud* to the Imperial minister, saying that as in his first reply to the Russian minister, he had manifested an intention of calling upon the mediators of the maritime powers to explain their sentiments upon the matter in question, I would (to get rid of this tiresome paper war) deliver aloud our sentiments in regard to the long contested point of two *separate bases*. That I would submit them to the whole assembly, as comprised in two *short phrases*, which I would afterwards cause to be inserted in the protocol of the Congress.

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The following are the precise words I used, in the French language, "Deux *bases separées* ne peuvent exister, puis qu'il y en a une *d'établie* par la Convention de Reichenbach, dont nos maîtres sont garants. Il y a deux *actes*, la Convention de Reichenbach, et la paix de Sistovo; mais il ne saurait y avoir *qu'une base*, et cette *unique* base est la Convention de Reichenbach."

It was a matter of infinite satisfaction to me to find, that it produced a very sudden and salutary effect, far beyond my expectation. *All parties were satisfied.*

Baron Herbert after a few words of explanation, only employed as a saving transition from *downright obstinacy* to *perfect compliance*, made an offer (in which I warmly encouraged him) to submit the whole to the judgment of the mediating ministers; requesting *them* to draw up such a preliminary act as they should judge most likely to be satisfactory to all sides.

I must not omit to mention that Baron Herbert in his usual style of dealing (he was bred a Jesuit) proposed, in the hearing of Marquis Lucchesini, that *I* should take on *myself* alone, the construction of the above-mentioned formulary. Your Grace will easily conceive that I rejected, in the most express terms, this artful and adulatory insinuation.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, Feb. 8th, 1791.

My Lord,

In order to fulfil, without delay, the request made to us (the mediating ministers,) in the last conference, we employed the forenoon of Saturday in uniting our joint endeavours to draw up such a *project* of a *preliminary* act, as we conceived to be liable to little

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or no objection. We established the basis of the negotiation at Sistovo on its only and *incontestible* ground, the Convention of Reichenbach. We deduced from them the rights which appertain to each sovereign *in virtue* of that convention, and we proceeded to ascertain the actual state of our negotiation, and the different obligations imposed on each of the contracting parties by that convention, and the most strict adherence to the principle of the *status quo ante bellum;* specifying such articles as have been clearly *agreed upon*, and such others as remain *to be discussed*. Our intention is that the Imperial plenipotentary should sign a French copy of the said act, giving to his Court the usual precedence of rank and title, and that the Turks should sign an exact translation, with the precedence they are accustomed to give their sovereign; that these two acts should be exchanged by the contracting parties, in presence of the mediators, and be afterwards put into our hands, till the definitive treaty shall be brought to full maturity.

I send your Grace enclosed a copy of that act sent *previously*, as we presented it to Count Herbert yesterday, at a meeting held at my house for the purpose. Here, and not without surprise as well as regret, we found the Imperial minister, notwithstanding the *full assent* he appeared to give to my declaration in the last conference, extremely averse to recognise the Convention of Reichenbach as the *basis* of our negotiation. He assured us that he had *express* orders from Vienna, *not to admit* that principle in the body of the definitive treaty, nor to acknowledge that the reciprocal obligations of the contracting parties flowed from that source. He said he would consent to the mention of the Reichenbach Convention in the *preamble* of the treaty of peace, but only *historically*, and not as the ground-work of treaty.

We in vain combatted this mode of reasoning, which

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to us appeared very false, by quoting the words of the Emperor's ratification, those of the ratification, and full powers given by the mediating Courts; and lastly, the terms of that acceptance which we had drawn with infinite difficulty from the Ottomans.

The Imperial minister persisted in assuring us that he was not at liberty to sign our project. From this it appeared evident to all the mediators, that the Court of Vienna (from what *solid* notion we cannot comprehend,) is hitherto determined to avoid, as much as possible, the acknowledgment of the Reichenbach Convention, as the *original foundation* and *restrictive rule* of our present negotiation.

Baron Herbert was not to be shaken. He said his instructions on this head were very recent and positive. He said he would reflect maturely on the project we had delivered, but feared he must send to Vienna for a decision. Should he find it absolutely necessary to do so, we are in the firm belief that the candour and liberality which are so conspicuous in the character of the Emperor, will lead that monarch to order his minister to subscribe an act dictated by the truest zeal, and the most rigid impartiality.

R. M. K.

[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

Sistovo, Feb. 10*th*, 1791.

My Lord,

The Prussian minister intending to send a courier to-day, to Vienna and Berlin, I seize the opportunity of informing your Grace of the unfortunate result of our conference yesterday with the Imperial minister, at his house. Baron Herbert *read* to us a sort of preface to the business (of which he gave us no copy,) and then delivered to each of the mediators a copy of the enclosed *contre projet*.

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Although it begins by acknowledging that "*les bases*" (M. Herbert employs the *plural* to cover his absurd proposition of *bases separées* in his former declaration,) of the present negotiation were *fixed* at Reichenbach, he will not admit that the stipulations now to be converted into a definitive treaty, flow *unquestionably* from that original source.

In contradistinction to the clear order of stipulation established there, and adhered to by the mediators in their project, Baron Herbert throws all the *three* articles of *restitution, deposit of fortresses,* and that of the Emperor's future *neutrality,* into one article of *immeasurable* length; and does this with the view of preventing their being canvassed or elucidated *separately.* He suppresses his own satisfactory phrase, in a preceding declaration, regarding the Emperor's neutrality "*pendant la guerre,*" and substitutes a vague one in its room. He then lengthens out the article comprehending the obligations incumbent on the Porte, far beyond its natural limits, and to the exclusion of all remonstrance on the subject of the *représailles par l'épée,* which the Turks are so very solicitous to abolish.

Either of these artful (and in themselves injudicious) deviations from the plain road which the Reichenbach Convention had marked out to *us all,* would have been sufficient to render this counter-project of the Imperial minister *inadmissible.* But the *intentional* omission (for such he acknowledged it to be) of the article recognising the King of Prussia's *stipulated right* to be the guarantee of the definitive treaty, determined the Prussian minister to reject the counter-project with expressions of surprise and *disdain.*

We questioned Baron Herbert in regard to the motive of such an unaccountable omission, and then the *secret came out,* that he had orders from his Court to "admit of *no stipulation* or *express acknowledgment* in

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the definitive treaty of Sistovo, of the right of guarantee *secured* to his Prussian Majesty by the Convention of Reichenbach." Baron Herbert made no scruple of repeating several times to the three mediators the above-mentioned explanation of his orders, and consequently all means of coming to an agreement drew to an end.

I told him that my Court had guaranteed not merely *one single principle* of the Reichenbach Convention, but the whole of the engagements contracted there. That the King of Prussia's guarantee was an express article of those stipulations, and the mention of it an act of indispensable justice. Marquis Lucchesini read the forcible and comprehensive paper enclosed, to the same purport, but without the smallest effect. We could only then express our regrets that the negotiation was thus retarded by the *intentional omission* as well as *studied confusion* of principles and consequences, which were so apparent in the paper delivered by the Imperial minister, and press on him the same expedition in the dispatch to his Court for further orders, which Marquis Lucchesini was about to manifest in his report of past proceedings to Berlin.

Sistovo, February 11*th.*

My Lord,

I availed myself yesterday of the departure of the Prussian courier for Vienna and Berlin, to convey to your Grace a circumstantial account of the unforeseen obstacle to the progress of our negotiation which the counter-project of the Imperial minister has raised. We, the mediators, remain in the full persuasion that the present appeal to the Courts of Venice and Berlin, will facilitate the happy termination of our business.

I hope that the King's messenger, Lauzun, is by this time very far advanced on his journey to London, and I rely implicitly on your lordship's goodness in shortening my most uncomfortable residence here, by the

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speedy return of those orders and instructions which will enable me to put the finishing hand to my share in the business.

The winter is now very severe in this part of Bulgaria, but we are assured that there is little danger of the Danube being *frozen over* at this season of the year.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

To these physical inconveniences and hardships (no trifling ones to a sexagenarian, braving a Bulgarian winter in a parcel of detached wooden huts) were added, during the long and dreary inaction to which Austrian bad faith—scarcely veiled by the shadow of an ostensible pretext—for many succeeding weeks condemned the mediators, the increasing difficulty of reconciling to such indecent procrastination their Turkish colleagues, and the probability of all their efforts for the pacification of Eastern Europe being frustrated by the newborn ardour for the resumption of the war, announced and explained in the following dispatch.

Sistovo, February 15th.

My Lord,

Whilst we find ourselves in the disagreeable situation of an entire suspension of the affairs of the Congress till the return of the couriers from Vienna and Berlin, our attention is chiefly turned to the active measures pursued by the Turkish Government to bring all their forces into the field at a much earlier season than usual.

In addition to intelligence received from several quarters of the increase of the army on the Lower Danube, by letters from Schumla (brought hither by a Tartar in four-and-twenty hours) we learned yesterday not only the *deposition*, but the *tragical end* of the late Grand Vizier Hassan Pasha. He arrived at

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Schumla on Saturday evening, where a Chiaoux Bashi, sent from Constantinople, demanded from him the seal of his high office. He was led to believe that his life was in no danger, and that he would be sent into exile; but at midnight the executioners broke into his bedchamber, and put him to death. He endeavoured to defend his life, and fired two pistols without effect, being himself shot dead, after having received the wound of a lance in the face. His head was cut off, and sent to Constantinople. It is supposed that his brother (who commanded at Baba Dag) has shared the same fate. He is by no means regretted, as the Imperial *firman* for his deposition accuses him, and very justly, of having disobeyed the orders sent him (after the conclusion of the armistice with Austria) to keep his army together and cross the Danube, for the relief of the important fortress of Ismail! By orders from Constantinople the horse-tails of the new Grand Vizier were to be displayed at Schumla on the 15th instant, and the 25th of March is appointed for the assembling and encampment of the Ottoman forces on the Lower Danube.

Jusuf Pasha, who was Grand Vizier at the commencement of this war, is again raised to that high office, and great reliance is placed on his military talents and enterprising character. He had lately been appointed Pasha of Bosnia, and was on his way thither when his former dignity was restored to him. The Turkish ministers expect he will arrive at Schumla in eight or ten days.

[*Cypher.*]

Whatever doubts may have remained at Berlin respecting the firm determination of the Grand Signor, to exert the whole force of his empire during the next campaign, are now effectually removed by Jusuf Pasha's being reinstated in the post of Grand Vizier; as he

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himself was the first promoter of the present war, and has now his honour and life at stake to promote it with the utmost vigour. This event gives great pleasure to my Prussian colleague, who writes this day to Schumla and Constantinople to keep up the warlike spirit which now reigns at the Porte. I can perceive that the Imperial minister is much concerned at the reappointment of Jusuf Pasha. They were in direct opposition to each other at the commencement of the war, and he knows that this Grand Vizier is very jealous of Austria. I am heartily sorry to find that the affairs of the Netherlands unhappily conspire with the disputes at this Congress to increase the ill-humour between the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna. I trust that the two monarchs will, at this juncture, give scope to the impulse of their own good qualities and principles rather than to the suggestions of these ministers, else I fear that all public affairs on this side of Europe may be sadly embroiled.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, February 13th, 1791.

I RECEIVED your New Year's letter, my dear Anne, a few days ago, and am in hourly expectation of one from Edinburgh. You have a world of *Auld Reekie* news to send me, and I am famished for want of British "*clish-ma-claver*."* My cronies here in Turkey are duller than *mill-horses*, and I am forced to say that their stubbornness exceeds that of Mahomet's mule. However, we had got them to a strike a gentle trot in the way to termination, when the Emperor's Plenipo thought proper to make us *halt*, by raising a Jesuitical stumbling-block,

* *Anglicé*, gossip.

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(the gentleman had the honour to be bred a Jesuit) which we have not been able to remove, without an appeal to Vienna. This delay, however, will break no squares, for we are well assured of the Emperor's *candid* and *liberal* sentiments, and have no doubts of his setting all *to rights* again, long before my messenger (who carried my last letter to you) can come back from England. I hope, my dear Anne, that about the middle of March I shall be in possession of all my orders, and that in the end of this month I may put my seal to the parchment.

As to state news—I whisper in your ear we are going to discard a Grand Vizier, Ruschuk Effendi (a silly fellow) and I believe we shall put Mehemet Ali, lately from the Dardanelles, in his place. See what a State-intriguer your brother is! But not a word of this to the *vulgar!*

February 15*th.*

I am sorry, my dear Anne, to be obliged to end my nonsensical epistle by the details of a Turkish tragedy. The Grand Vizier was deposed four days ago, which he deserved; but they let the poor man go to bed in the belief that he had nothing to fear but being *exiled.* They broke into his room at midnight, and cut off his head; what a pleasure it is to live under such a government!

Jusuf Pasha (a clever active officer, who was Grand Vizier at the beginning of the war), is again the chief minister, and general. I hope he will both move his stumps, and keep his head on his shoulders. Adieu, my dear sisters; I am perfectly well, but dog-tired of Bulgaria. In six weeks I hope to be released. Love to friends and cronies. Good bless you all!

R. M. K.

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LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT, *Hague, Feb. 19th*, 1791.

I have long wished for an occasion to write a sort of chit-chat letter to you in answer to the friendly notes which have accompanied several most interesting dispatches from you. I am now in hourly expectation of seeing *Lauzun*,* not that I believe you will come to any absolute conclusion till something is decided as to the Russian pacification. But the fair and candid proceeding of the Imperial minister in his *second* note, seems to make it difficult for the other parties to postpone coming to some preliminary transmissible to their respective Courts.†

The question as to the revival of the treaties, it must be confessed (at least I am willing individually to confess it both for myself and the Grand Pensionary) never occurred to the recollection of any of us at the period of the Reichenbach Convention. It cannot be denied, on the one hand, that they come fairly within the principle of the *status quo*. If, however, in their specific contents there should be any clause which militates against a more recent argument, good faith requires such clause to be modified and corrected. Thus far, I believe there will not prevail any great diversity of opinion at Vienna and Berlin, and still less here and in England. But it is a very different consideration whether these treaties should be specified or renewed, otherwise than by a general expression; nor can it, I think, be argued, that they have any pretension to the guarantee of the mediating powers.

* The King's Messenger, who was the bearer of the extorted *Turkish* concessions.

† Written it will be perceived, previous to the transfer of obstacles to the side of Austria.

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It must be heavy work for you to agitate so complicated a business, with people who have no common language with you; who are afraid to charge themselves with any responsibility, and who, at the same time, have all the ignorance and prejudice of the sixteenth century. Notwithstanding all this, your important task is in a good train; its results will, I am sure, prove advantageous to all the parties concerned, and highly creditable to you.

Your last dispatch is dated 18th January, and will proceed to-night to England. It comes very quick to this place. If the Russian crisis were decided, you would see your way clear. The Empress continues to answer us very civilly, but with unmoved determination, that she will receive with pleasure our good offices to obtain for her the cession of Ockzakow and its district. We continue to knock at every door (and not without success) to join us in recommending to her Imperial Majesty to content herself with the conditions of the *status quo*. In the meantime, we keep up a fleet of twenty-four ships of the line, and the Emperor advances his military preparations; I still hope and trust, however, that some means will be found to avoid extremities. Now a word on other subjects.

I should say a few words to you on the Netherlands' business, though you will have better intelligence from Lord Elgin at the fountain head. It was neither a wise nor a dignified measure in the Imperial ministers to engage their excellent sovereigns in the apparent chicane which is involved in the proposed clause which they wish to add to their pacification. It is probable that the object was to flatter Prince Kaunitz by seeming to sanction and renew the measures and arrangements of his ministry in the provinces; but if the Allied Courts had lent themselves to so strange a complaisance, I have not a doubt that in spite of the army upon the spot, the new fermentation would have been extreme and perma-

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nent. I have so much faith in the Emperor's wisdom that I think and trust he will inform himself how ill he has been counselled, and settle the business which must otherwise remain unsettled. It would interest you little were I to enter into particulars, but I think I could show to you that if we were disposed to admit this unbecoming clause, we should admit a mere absurdity and nullity in its effect; though it bears pretensions which ought not to have been brought forward. In the meantime, I pray and trust that none of *us* may ever be so ill-used in our negotiations as the Comte de Mercy is by his employers. On this side of Europe all goes well, except in France, where *ruere in pejus* continues to be the prevailing principle of action. God knows how it will end.

Nothing can be more brilliant than our position in England, and the advantages to result from maintaining it are such, that I dread anything that may seem to endanger it. Notwithstanding the interruption arising from the Spanish business,* the net revenue for 1790 was 16,000,000*l.* sterling,† being near 400,000*l.* more than ever was known, and a degree of opulence is now circulating through the country, with an unexempled energy and activity, both in agriculture and manufactures. Mr. Pitt is going to explain before a new committee the general statement of revenue, of expense, of the sinking fund, of the progress towards the reduction of the debt, and of the actual state of commerce. In the meantime the measures for paying the late expenses are executing without any trouble, or any apparent sensation in the country.

There have been many reports of our sufferings in the East Indies. Those reports are positively disproved by

* The war lately existing in that quarter, but happily terminated.

† Little more than one-third of the present times.

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dispatches of a subsequent and recent date; and except that a war at any rate is a bad thing, we have every reason to believe that Tippoo Sultan will have the worst of the business. In speaking of wars, I always have before my eyes the concluding sentence of the history of one of the Russian wars, "*Ainsi finit cette malheureuse guerre: ah! quelle guerre ne l'est pas?*"

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistowo, Feb. 22nd.

My Lord,

Since the 20th instant, when I had the honour to write to your Grace by a Prussian estafette, nothing has occurred to make any external alteration in the situation of affairs. As the Ottomans are still without advices from their new Grand Vizier, it is supposed that in his journey from Bosnia to Schumla, he has taken a road far distant from this part of Bulgaria. There is such a heavy fall of snow at this moment, that the roads in this hilly country will become almost impassable.

[*Cypher.*]

It was matter of concern to me to learn yesterday, from the Minister of Prussia, that his letters from Berlin by the last post, afford the most convincing proofs of the animosity which reigns there, towards the Court of Vienna.

I can easily conceive that the inconsistent conduct and equivocal language of the Austrian ministry, have given just cause for that animosity. But I cannot help regretting that the first instructions sent to my Prussian colleague are of such a nature as to remove all probability of a conclusion of our business here, to a very distant period.

His Prussian Majesty declares that he is not only

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resolved to refuse his guarantee to every sort of commercial treaty between Austria and the Porte, (a determination which appears to me very justifiable, and which might have been foreseen), but that he will, in no shape, concur in the renewal or confirmation of these treaties. If these resolutions are to be invariably adhered to, I imagine it will be a difficult matter to bring the Court of Vienna to subscribe to them. At all events, on that supposition we should not advance one step in three months, under the timid and versatile management of my Austrian colleague.

[*Extract.*]

February 25th, 1791.

My Lord,

The affairs of the Congress are in a state of entire suspension till the return of the couriers from Vienna and Berlin.

[*Cypher.*]

The two last posts from the latter place have produced a very great change in the language of the Prussian minister here. He now leans entirely to the side of protection, and foretels many more obstacles to the assembling of the Turkish army, than the Turks themselves. If those projected delays in our negotiation are judged necessary for the good cause by the Court of Berlin, I will give way with a good grace. But I sincerely wish that the Prussian Cabinet would adopt one settled plan of conduct with respect to this Congress; as I have had occasion to remark more than once, that the orders from thence, by three successive posts, are in contradiction with each other.

[*Cypher.*]

March 1st, 1791.

I have talked very ingenuously to my Prussian colleague, in regard to the frequent variations in the

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measures of his Court; and he seems convinced that we must now lay down a settled plan of conduct, and one as far conciliatory as rigid impartiality, and a just attention to the dignity of our Courts can permit: that we may expect great haughtiness and many false reasonings from the cabinet of Prince Kaunitz; but that we must meet them with temper, as well as firmness, and refute them by calm discussion.

That minister* has promised me that if the Court of Vienna shall embrace our preliminary project without any very material alteration, he will take upon him to go on in that line, without any fear of being disavowed by his sovereign. He is determined to make a point of suppressing the preposterous clause by which Austria would assert the right of reprisals by the sword, and when that shall be effected, has no doubt of engaging the King of Prussia to combine with his guarantee of the *status quo*, a simple ratification of the commercial treaties.

I am, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistovo, March 2nd, 1791.

I HAVE been for this fortnight past, my dear sister, as dull as a moulting parrot, who cannot even make a *noise* in his cage. A paroxysm of teazing litigation between two of my colleagues, produced, about the middle of last month, a direct opposition of opinion, which proved a sandbank, on which our political bark stuck fast; but without any danger of shipwreck. Couriers have been sent to the master pilots at Berlin and Vienna. Their directions are now expected every hour, and I am persuaded that the vessel will soon be

* The Prussian Plenipotentiary.

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set afloat, and with a fair prospect of ending her voyage happily. In the mean time, I have led an insipid life; such a life as would have *tired an oyster*. But what with five German romances, three political folios, and half a dozen French firebrand pamphlets, and a couple of new almanacks, I have crept on through my vegetable existence, and enriched my mind with some queer knowledge, and a supplement to my favourite store of nonsense! If I were to tell my Mussulman messmates what a delight I take in *nonsense*, every hair of their head would wag contempt at me. But the truth is, that these Plenipos are so very wise, so mortally sententious, and so devoid of imagination, that a facetious cobbler is worth a score of them.

My Christian colleagues are not remarkable for pleasantry; yet I have heard them laugh *outright* (contrary to the advice of Lord Chesterfield), and they have all genius enough to enter into the spirit of Burke's book, which I have lent to them, and as they read English, it has proved a real feast to each of them in his turn. The French nation is going on to enhance the value of that book, by plunging deeper and deeper into the slough of *anarchy*. I was sorry to learn by a late letter from Arbuthnot, that the democratic madness is daily gaining ground at Geneva, and at Lausanne.

But softly, my dear Anne! here am I wasting my paper upon *Christian* follies, when I have a score of Turkish "*uncos*"* to relate. You remember in my last that we had just deposed a Grand Vizier, and that the Sultan had been graciously pleased to order the poor man's *head* to attend at the Sublime Porte, but without the *body!* A similar act of favour has since been extended to the Grand Vizier's brother, and their two heads are now stuck on the gate of their *benevolent*

* *Anglicé*, marvels.

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sovereign. Their goods and lands are confiscated, their wives and children turned out to beggary, and that tragedy consummated in the true Turkish style! The reinstated Grand Vizier, Jusuf Pasha, is come to Schumla,* his head-quarters (at a day's journey from hence), and it is now his business to show that he has a head *worth keeping on his shoulders*. It was he, Jusuf, who reduced all the towns and villages of the Bannat of Temeswaer into heaps of ashes, three years ago (as I told you, in my peregrination); and as he likewise was kind enough to drive *all* the inhabitants of those countries, man and beast, into slavery, he bids fair to tinge his future laurels (in whatever land he may acquire them) with a deep shade of the crimson dye. The *possibility* of preventing such devastation makes me hold up *manfully* against all the miseries of a Sistovo life, and if I am happy enough to be able to say hereafter, to my conscience and to my friends, that I have contributed *essentially* to thrust all manner of swords, poignards, and scimitars back into their *scabbards*, my Tweeddale mutton will taste sweeter to me than the finest venison, for the rest of my days. I have been sadly vexed by all these procrastinations of the salutary work, but I hold myself *certain* of its being well ended *here*, and within a short space of time.

As to the Northern heroine, she has bought Ismail *very dear*, by the loss of five or six thousand of her best soldiers; and in my opinion still *dearer* by the inhuman butchery of almost twenty thousand Turks, half of whom were old people, children, and women. If Russia be determined to have another campaign, in order to *thin* the ranks of the human race, I trust that the lesson to be brought *home* to her Imperial Majesty will be such an one as to leave a *wholesome* impression for the rest of

* Since so celebrated in the Russian invasion of Turkey.

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her reign. But I hate the very name of wars; let's talk of something else!

The great news of Sistovo, for instance! Our fishermen on the Danube caught a sort of sturgeon the other day, and sold it to my cook; it weighed *only* about one hundred and eighty English pounds—a mere trifle! for every inhabitant of Sistovo will take his Alcoran oath that at Widdin, not far from hence, two sturgeon were taken two years ago, the one of above *seven*, and the other above *eight* hundred weight. I am a great traveller, Anne, but as little inclined to lie as any of the tribe. Apropos of sturgeon,—your acquaintance, the dropsical Waiwode, is dying fast. But, alas! another harpy is ready to take his place.

March 3rd.

Oho! Mrs. Anne! here comes your manifesto of the 29th of January. It shows we are on an excellent footing of correspondence; and that nonsense circulates as it should do. You ask me if I pick up any of the *Saracen secrets* by my occult knowledge of their language? I did at first, a great many: but the cunning plenipos took to the *Persian* in their private innuendos. I am studying that language hard, and I discovered the Reis Effendi saying in Persian t'other day, to the Mollah de la Mecque, these very important words: "Ereile penal uzimi," which means, "*Your tobacco is better than mine.*" I immediately saw to the bottom of the Mahometan metaphor, employed to put me on the wrong scent, and was sure that his Excellency said to the Mollah, "Sir Robert Keith has beat *my* arguments out of doors, try if you can muster up any better."

It is a charming thing to possess half a hundred languages; and I regret much that my Erse begins to grow *rusty*, but I will rub it up again, the first winter I shall pass in *Corryarick*. You see I have got into the custom of setting down my cage upon a *hill*—towards

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Christmas! I intend to pass a fortnight on Mount Hæmus, which I can now see from my back windows.

But to return to my negotiations. That same negotiation with the Porte which you recommend to me, in order to obtain *two tails at least* before I set out, meets my fancy mightily. It squares so cleverly with your other advice about matrimony, that it deserves the most mature consideration. But pray don't bespeak my bride till I am dead sure of my tails!

Did you observe in the newspapers that our brave Emperor Leopold had the chicken-pox about a month ago? All Vienna, young and old, were smitten with that distemper, but all got well again. His Emperorship and the Kingships of Naples, are going to set out in a fortnight for Italy, to install the young Duke of Tuscany in his dominions. The King of Naples has delighted all Germany by his unaffected *cantyness*.* He laughs, and junkets, and Nimrods, and gambols, as if he had never seen a diadem, and had not a single drop of Bourbon blood in his veins. Alas! for Louis the Sixteenth! I wonder if there will ever be a Louis the Seventeenth? But I wander sadly, as all great orators are apt to do.

To return to Imperial Leopold; I trust that he will bestow his ultimate *fiat* on our business here before he sets out for Italy. What a sad thing it would be to send a political *query* from Sistovo to Naples, and to wait for an answer! All our beards would grow grey (mine is already two inches long) before we could untie in that manner the knots of our negotiation.

Oh! I had almost forgotten to tell you to take out your maps and study the geography of Transylvania, and the course of the rivers Marosch and Theiss, and the county of Marmarosch, as I shall direct my course homeward that way. I shall only stop a day or two at

* *Anglicé*, cheerfulness.

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Hermandstadt, and as much with my friend the Bishop of Groswaradin, who is a great admirer of yours, and inquires often and kindly for *Miss* Barbara Stirling.* My love to that young lady. She shall have the handsomest Turkish handkerchief in my possession, and one that is remarkable for having been thrown by the Grand Signor in the face of his favourite damsel not a month ago! You shall have three or four handkerchiefs to distribute, and if your fair paintress will accept one, it is at her service, *mais sans conséquence.* Pray offer my respects to all the Buccleugh family in return for all their goodness towards me and mine. I hope they esteem me too much to deprive me of the happiness of receiving and *cherishing* Lord Dalkeith at *Vienna.* I have written to my good friend *Madame la première Maréchale de Schoenberg* at Dresden, to show him every attention for my sake; she will do all she can to render his stay there agreeable. It was a real disappointment to me to be absent from Vienna whilst Sir John Macpherson (who expresses for me, though *unknown,* a very flattering partiality) passed two months in that capital. Tell his friend ——— that Sir John and I had actually made an appointment, at a thousand miles' distance, to meet at my table in Vienna, and drink a bottle together to the health of our friends at *Talisker.* Sir John is gone to Italy for the winter, but I hope to see him in Austria a few months hence. Say everything that is cordial from me to your Dowager chum,† and tell her that she and her children are by much the best arguments for *tardy* matrimony that I ever met with. But you know I am to talk no more of this matter till I am dubbed a Bashaw. Hearty good wishes to all manner of friends. Your town of Edinburgh will be so very

* The *nonagenarian* grand aunt so often cordially mentioned.

† The late Dowager Countess of Balcarres, who at the advanced age of ninety, saw herself surrounded by a large and flourishing family.

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geometrical, that the very *dubs** will run at right angles. *Apropos* to your college—might not I in my old age, lay a claim to be your professor of *oriental languages?* This has been a misty morning, my dear Anne, and I have turned it to account in palavering with your spinstership. But I must now get on my nag, and go to eat tough mutton and shrivelled carrots with my chum Baron Haeften, who is well in spite of bad food and ill-digested politics. You shall have a supplementary dab of my nonsense to-morrow morning; in the mean time, "Whizzel durg quanga," that is to say in Bulgarian, "Joy be with you."

March 4th.

It is fit, my dear Anne, that I should make you acquainted with this same new Vizier, Jusuf Pasha, who is going to make so much noise. He was born a Georgian (not a *Jacobite*) Christian, and was, consequently, a Whig from his cradle. He was kidnapped from his parents at six years old, and sent to Constantinople to be a *slave*, and thereby made his fortune; and that is, perhaps, the reason why he makes slaves of all Christians he can lay his hands on. His genius was first displayed as a *rice* merchant, and the Grand Admiral, finding him sell some toothsome rice to the fleet, advanced Jusuf to the dignity of his—pipe-stopper! Don't smile, Mrs. Anne,—this is a true bill; and to a great man, who smokes tobacco *sixteen* hours in the four-and-twenty, an ingenious pipe-stopper is no indifferent personage. He *stopped* so well, that he did not stop there, but became in time coffee-maker, inkstand-carrier, purse-bearer, secretary, treasurer, and agent at the Porte. Here he got his *first tail*, and was in the way of a second, when he made a small mistake, by giving out and believing that his old master the Captain Pasha was

* *Anglicé*, gutters.

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dead, when he was only in a fainting fit; by which the Grand Signor had almost been led into the other mistake of confiscating the Grand Admiral's property just as he came to himself again! This caused a *coldness* between the Admiral and Jusuf; but the latter made a courtly tergiversation, got into the Grand Signor's service, and acquired another *tail* into the bargain.

He was then Pasha of the Morea, where, with a *third tail*, he did wonders; and his old master the Captain Pasha being absent in Egypt, who so fit to be Grand Vizier (on a vacancy) as the Georgian Jusuf? The Captain Pasha came back from Egypt—kissed the hem of the Grand Vizier Jusuf's garment, *as in duty bound*, and wished him at the devil, as *human nature commanded*. A year after, Jusuf was *disgraced*, and who became Grand Vizier, but the old Captain Pasha? Down goes Jusuf, lower and lower—Pasha of Widdin, then degraded to be Pasha of Giustendil, and he might have been once more reduced to the trade of a *rice merchant*, had not the old Vizier his master chosen to *die*. The tide again turns in favour of Jusuf, and the late Grand Vizier being a blockhead, and his head condemned to the block, in steps my Jusuf, and he, at this moment, promises to be the saviour of the Ottoman Empire, and the terror of Prince Potemkin! Heaven grant he may! God bless the sisterhood.

R. M. K.

[*Extract.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistovo, March 4th, 1791.

My Lord,

Authentic information will have been transmitted to your Grace from Vienna, respecting the very open and upright language which his Imperial Majesty was pleased to hold to Baron Jacobi, in his audience of the 17th February, touching the affairs of the Congress.

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We hear the most favourable conclusions from thence, and entertain a sanguine hope that orders will have been sent to Baron Herbert, to adopt the most material articles of our fulminary project, and to carry the negotiation to a speedy conclusion. We understand the Ottomans intend to press the Imperial minister to resume the general conferences.

[*Cypher.*]

March 8th, 1791.

The letters brought us yesterday from Vienna contain several reports which were current there, respecting the language held on the preceding Saturday, by Baron Spielman, of a very different purport from those gracious and conciliatory expressions, touching the affairs of this Congress, which the sovereign himself employed two days before towards the minister of Prussia. Your Grace will easily conceive, that I am far from giving credit to such reports; as their having any foundation in truth, would only prove that the inferior persons in the Austrian Chancery are bold enough to avow and to support opinions which are by no means consistent with the declared sentiments of his Imperial Majesty. I am much afraid, however, my lord, that what I lately predicted, is but too likely to be verified; and that the haughtiness of Prince Kaunitz will find means to counteract the upright intentions of the Emperor. I confess that I cannot comprehend in what manner it can be derogatory to the honour of that monarch to acknowledge the basis laid at Reichenbach, at the same time that he declares his readiness to fulfil every stipulation of that convention. Should Prince Kaunitz have prevailed, and dictated such orders to Baron Herbert, it will be the means of throwing our negotiation here into absolute confusion.

R. M. K.

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MY LORD, *Sistovo, March 15th*, 1791.

I can hardly express to your Grace how irksome the suspense has been in which I have lived, during the *forty days* which have now elapsed, since the last general conference was held here. I can form to myself no idea of the motives which engage the Courts of Vienna and Berlin to delay the transmittal of those orders which their plenipotentiaries requested by separate couriers dispatched from hence on the 10th February, and who arrived at their destinations with uncommon expedition.

The Ottoman ministers are in a very disagreeable situation, and declare that they receive frequent reproaches from the Porte, touching the dilatory proceedings of the Congress; putting us in mind of the loud complaints we made against them for a suspension of seventeen days, in the beginning of our negotiation, whereas above six weeks have now elapsed, without advancing one step, or even holding a general conference.

The mediating ministers do what they can to keep them in good temper, in hopes that as the Emperor is setting out for Italy, his ultimate orders to his ministers here will prove satisfactory and conclusive; as it cannot be supposed that his Imperial Majesty will leave points of such difficult and delicate discussion to be treated hereafter by a correspondence between Sistovo and Florence! I have had a very interesting dispatch from the King of Prussia to his minister here,—in which that monarch declares his firm resolution to maintain invariably every one of his rights acquired at Reichenbach, and ordering Mons. Lucchesini not to give way in *any shape* to Baron Herbert's groundless pretensions. Your Grace will judge from thence of the probability of our negotiation yet encountering insuperable difficulties.

R. M. K.

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[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

Sistovo, March 20th, 1791.

My Lord,

I seize the opportunity of the departure of a Prussian courier for Vienna, to enter into some detail respecting the critical state of affairs here, since the determination of the Court of Vienna to keep this negotiation in a state of *suspense* for some time longer, has become manifest to all the ministers of the Congress.

The Turks are more and more confirmed in their suspicion that the Austrian ministry (either from political views of their own, or in compliance with the suggestions of Russia) have resolved to leave the Porte in doubt with regard to the issue of the negotiation, in order to perplex the Grand Vizier in the choice of his plan of operations for the ensuing campaign, and perhaps with the hope of deriving advantages from the extension of the war to other parts of Europe.

Your Grace will have learned from Vienna, and on much better grounds than any on which I can found a judgment at Sistovo, what have been the real motives of Austria for her sudden and almost total change of conduct and language. But I am well founded in drawing, from an expression employed by Count Cobentzel to Baron Jacobi, the conclusion that Austria has conceived the project of retaining possession of the conquests in Wallachia, &c., beyond the term of the present armistice.

It appears to me on the other hand a self-evident proposition, that nothing could be more prejudicial to the interests of the Ottoman Empire, than to listen to any proposal for the prolongation of that armistice.

By consenting to it the Grand Vizier's hands would be in a great measure tied up from making an effectual

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use of those advantages which he has a right to promise himself from an early exertion of that great military force, which (by an activity hitherto unknown in this empire, and with a profusion of expense) will be collected under his standard in the course of the month of May; an early period, when the Russian army cannot be recruited and re-equipped after the losses of the last campaign.

It certainly depends on the Grand Vizier to avail himself of the undoubted right which, in regard to the point in question, is secured to him by the express tenor of the third article of the convention of armistice.

[*Copy.*]

"Que cet armistice ne se concluant que pour laisser le tems, tant à la Cour de Vienne, et à la Porte, qu'à la Cour de Prusse et ses alliés l'Angleterre et la Hollande, d'envoyer du plenipotentiaires au Congrès pour y traiter definitivement de la paix: Et comme il est également de l'intérêt des deux États d'accélérer ce grand ouvrage, on promet de part et d'autre d'y procéder *incessamment*, et de l'achever le *plutôt possible*; et que même pour prévenir tout *dilation quelconque*, on s'engage à la conclure définitivement dans *l'éspace de neuf mois*: de sorte que la presente acte ne sera en vigueur que du jour de sa signature (le 19 Septembre, 1790) jusqu'à la fin du *mois de Mai*, 1791."

The engagement contained in the above article being so precise, your Grace will undoubtedly approve of my supporting the Ottomans in their claim to its rigid accomplishment; if they should think proper to *require* the good offices and intervention of the mediating ministers on this head.

R. M. K.

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March 22nd.

My Lord,

A Prussian courier, dispatched from Berlin on the 4th instant, and who left Vienna on the 11th, brought me very interesting letters from both those capitals. Your Grace is already fully informed of the state of public affairs there, which renders superfluous any attempt of mine to throw additional light on them from hence.

All we know is, that the Austrian plenipotentiaries have not received the instructions which have been so long expected, and the Turkish ministers are not only much hurt by such an unaccountable protraction, but begin to conceive suspicions (which the mediating ministers spare no pains to eradicate) that the Court of Vienna has some new plan in view, little consistent with the stipulations of the Reichenbach Convention.

[*Cypher.*]

The Turks are full of anxiety and mistrust, and it must be owned that the conduct of the Austrian ministers here, and of their military men in this neighbourhood, rather tends to strengthen than invalidate such apprehensions. The Ottomans are every day pressing the Prussian minister to hasten the conclusion of peace, as they represent, (and with some reason) that the chief object to them is the recovery of their important provinces, and not the maintenance of a point of honour in the formation of the treaty. The Prussian minister has great difficulty in keeping them quiet till he shall receive his definitive instructions.

By what Mr. Jackson writes me (in utmost confidence) and by what I have drawn from Monsieur Lucchesini, I see reason to believe that Monsieur Hertzberg,* (after holding alternately in his letters to this place, the

* Prime Minister of Prussia.

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language of inflexible firmness, and of mild pliability) was, at the departure of this courier, in the humour of yielding many points to the Austrian ministry, and of allowing them to model the definitive treaty according to their own pleasure.

I have told my Prussian colleague (in presence of the Dutch minister) that as I can receive no intermediate orders to alter my language and conduct, I must leave it wholly and solely to him to take possession of the ground which shall be precisely marked out to him in his peremptory instructions. I have declared that I will assist him strenuously in maintaining the whole extent of our preliminary project, if his Court judges that to be proper. But that if he shall have orders to relinquish that ground step by step, I shall (but without committing the honour of my sovereign) do my best to cover his (Monsieur Lucchesini's) retreat, and to render it as becoming as possible. With all this, my lord, it would little surprise me to find that the next letters from Berlin breathe nothing but animosity and indignation against the Court of Vienna.

I am sorry to be forced to beg of your Grace to remark how difficult, as well as painful, my situation must be, amidst so many variations and tergiversations on every side; and I regret most sincerely the necessity of fatiguing your Grace with so many complaints of that mysterious silence of the Court of Vienna, by which the ministers of such respectable Courts are kept in a state of irksome, and in many respects unbecoming, inactivity.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

[It would indeed "fatigue," and to no possible purpose, even the most determined amateur of diplomacy to wade through the continued correspondence, which

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(even during this truly "irksome" suspension of all the beneficent objects of his mission) a sense of duty, and the dire necessity of chronicling from post to post, for his principal at home, the revolting inconsistencies, and harassing fluctuations of his colleagues, imposed on the deeply disgusted plenipotentiary of Britain. It has been felt to be due to his memory, and to the honour of England, to unveil at some length, and in his own indignant language, his uneasiness while condemned to breathe an atmosphere of duplicity and intrigue, above which it is pleasing to see this veteran in Courts, but novice in chicane, carrying unsullied his lofty Briton's head. No one, whether initiated, or uninitiated in politics, can have perused thus far without perceiving, that had it rested with our representative, to sweep away by a dozen words of manly straightforward truth, the innumerable subterfuges (whose name we shall hereafter find was "legion"), the Congress of Sistovo (on whose very threshold his able brother diplomatist, Lord Auckland, writes that "being in such good hands as his *for all parties*, it is considered as already settled") instead of dragging on for eight weary months, would have been honourably and satisfactorily terminated in as many days.

The first of the intervals during which, as Sir Robert himself expresses it, his political bark "lay hopelessly aground," may be beguiled by the introduction of one of Lord Auckland's own able and satisfactory letters.—Ed.]

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, March 24th, at night.

My dear Sir,

I shall send this hasty scrawl without scruple, and under flying seal, with Lord Grenville's dispatch to

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Mr. Stratton, who will forward it to you. The dispatch is so full that I will not attempt to add anything on the subject to which it relates. It has been a corroding circumstance to my mind to see the procrastination which from every quarter has affected your Sistovo discussions. It was the evident game from the first of the Emperor, and still more of the Imperial ministers, to keep their pacification with the Turks unsettled; and it was therefore our business to finish completely with the Emperor *everywhere*, before we articulate one syllable to Russia.

It is impossible to observe without concern the inconsistent assurances, and unfixed and unsatisfactory language which you have been obliged to report; and which, unhappily, not only for the Austrian Empire, but for Europe, is too much in the style of everything that has happened ever since the Emperor arrived from Florence. Those to whose services he is indebted for such an impression best know their own motives and inducements. But it is beyond any powers of my mind, when I put together many circumstances previous to the Reichenbach Convention, during that convention immediately subsequent to it at Vienna and Florence; and all the circumstances of the Hague negotiation, the details of what is going on in the Netherlands, and all the late accounts from Sistovo, and the versatilities of all your conferences during your present mission—to assign any system to such a conduct that can be stated in terms of due decorum. It appears to be calculated in all its parts for the sole end of creating discontents and fermentation in domestic affairs, and distrust and dissatisfaction in foreign Courts. I know that an Austrian minister, in answer to such a criticism, can in lofty words intimate supreme contempt for the ideas of others, and the most complacent admiration for his own; nevertheless, the opinion of the audience in most theatres is more correct than that of the actors.

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It is a good and pleasant pursuit in the transactions of human life, to endeavour to draw good out of evil; and I have strong hopes that the incomprehensible conduct to which I allude will tend to prevent the breaking out of new wars in Europe, and, in its effects, to a general pacification sooner than was expected. I will take occasion to explain this by the first safe conveyance. Meantime, I am quite unhappy for my friend Sir Robert Keith, whose patience must be worn to the bone before the end of this negotiation; of which I see no prospect except in the allusion conveyed in the second paragraph of this scrawl, which I cannot explain further by this channel. I am greatly interested in the accounts from Sistovo, vexatious as they are. Adieu my dear Sir Robert, preserve your health and spirits, and forward me an instrument of pacification by the next messenger at latest.

Believe me ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, March 23rd, 1791.

N.B.—Remember I use *black-edged* paper for want of white, as our grandfather Sir James Dick took pyecrust for want of bread.*

My flow of nonsense has been *damm'd up* for these three weeks, my dear sisters, by an unexpected and very vexatious litigation which took place in the Congress; not amongst us, the men of *mediation*, but among those who are the *principal* parties. This caused a reference to Berlin, Vienna, and Constantinople, and as the return of the couriers from *all* those capitals has been unaccountably delayed, we have sat with our arms

* While Provost of Edinburgh, and during a siege of the castle of that city.

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across till they are almost *benumbed.* For my part, I have pressed, prayed, and urged, in every quarter; and at this moment I have the best reason to believe that before Sunday next, we shall again display the *olive branch,* and with the fairest hopes of planting it firmly, in three weeks' time. Judge, my dear Anne, how much I (who am not made to burrow four months in a state of *torpor* on a Bulgarian hill) long for a satisfactory conclusion, and a speedy return to my fellow-Christians!

These Turks may be (and I allow they are) good men and true, in point of probity, good faith, and other *unfashionable* virtues; but a *duller* race never vegetated on the face of the earth. They have *drawled* away this last month not in very good humour, but rather in no *humour at all;* and so little bustle or sensation does the presence of these great lords of Turkey make in this poor village, that when we Christians wish to ascertain their *existence,* we must send our dragoman to be eye-witnesses of their smoking each a pipe with their usual energy.

Not an incident or anecdote has enlivened Sistovo, save only a *fire,* which consumed a few Bulgarian huts (which our piastres have helped to rebuild), and a theft committed by a Turkish servant of my mehmandar (you know that means "purveyor"), who was pleased to rob his own master of a gold watch I gave him, and a purse of money, which the mehmandar had, for greater security, deposited in one of his *old boots.* The faithless valet was *discovered,* and ought to have been *hanged* (because he would have let a boy belonging to my washerwoman be hanged upon suspicion if we had not interfered), but was only sent to the gallies. These, my dear Anne, are the only events of my last woeful six weeks!

As to the Turkish inhabitants of this town, my

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acquaintance with them is not more intimate than with the inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands, at whom I have repeatedly stared in the prints of Cook's Voyages. I have been looking out for antiquities and Roman inscriptions. By the help of my trusty companion, and useful assistant in the copying way, Mr. Stuart, I have discovered *several*. One, very curious, indeed, and in perfect preservation, lies in the Greek churchyard, within *ten yards* of the back of my house. It was erected (and probably at a very small distance from the spot where it now is) in the time of the Emperor Adrian, to mark the precise separation between the two great provinces of Mœsia and Thrace. I believe I am a *Thracian at this moment*, and I am glad of it; for both their men and woman had more spirit and game than the vulgar Mœsians. But I send you herewith an exact copy of the inscription,* that you and your Edinburgh *literati* may decide the question.

The weather has been very mild, and the health of the whole Christian colony uninterrupted. I made one excursion on horseback, to see a little of the environs, but I found only some bleak hills on one hand, and some tolerable vineyards on the other. *Nota Bene*—the law of Mahomet against drinking *wine* seems to have lost much of its authority; for though the Turks make as if they shuddered at wine in *public*, many of them will swill to any extent in *private*. This vice was grown to such a height at Constantinople that the Grand Signor thought it, two months ago, a duty of his religion to shut up *all at once* the whole taverns of his capital, to the number of many hundreds. So far *well*, but his Sublimity carried the joke a little too far, for he ordered all the notorious *bibbers* on whom hands could be laid, to be sewed into sacks, and thrown into the sea! Let

* This has unfortunately not been found.

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George the Third try his hand at such a bit of legislation, and we should have a pretty uproar.

So much for Turkish sobriety—now for Ottoman courage. It has been a little out at elbows since the beginning of this war, and the Russians were near destroying the last shreds of it. But the massacre of ten or twelve thousand Turkish women and children at Ismail (and above all their fathers and husbands) seems to have awakened the old Saracen spirit, and my new acquaintance, Vizier Jusuf, swears he will have his revenge on these Russian ruffians. And may he have it, soon and completely, say I! I am gladdened with your three letters, dear Anne, since your return to Edinburgh, and rejoice heartily at the tidings of our mutual friends there. I trust that you keep me in the *kind* remembrance of all these good people, and of all my *nears and dears*, for whom my affection is *unutterable*. Tell them they shall have *all* my stories at my return, slowly, circumstantially, and *tediously*, as Eastern tales ought to be told—in the evening of life, over a clear Scotch coal fire. I whisper in your ear that in order to make my personal tale more interesting, I have a plot to watch and waylay my Turkish damsel with the *white hand* so closely, that it shall go hard with me if, before my departure, I cannot speak *pertinently* as to the colour of her *boot* as well as that of her *fist*. And, indeed, my dear Anne, she must thank herself, if I do drive matters to that *extremity*, for all Sistovo knows that she coquetted with me most egregiously the day of my public entry. I have already discovered that she lives upon the *third hill*, to the *left hand* as you look from my window; and that, you know, is a great deal, considering that in the *straight line* of my vision there are only (and I have counted them) *two hundred and seventy-three stone walls* between my charmer and me. But you must have patience, my

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dear Anne, for *boot* or *no boot*, I am too much of a gentleman to say a word of the matter till I am out of the continent and turned of seventy.

I am looking out every hour for the return of a messenger whom I dispatched to England in the end of January. Think what a *pleasure* it is, to know that each question I find it necessary to ask *at home*, may be answered within the short space of two calendar months! This is one of the *advantages* of Sistovo; and, indeed, they are numberless.

March 25*th*.

Well, and hearty, my dear sisters; but out of all patience at the unaccountable protraction of our business; which is to be imputed to the Austrian ministers. We trust, however, that in eight and forty hours they will again be completely rigged out for the joint voyage; and that we shall sail before the wind to our long wished-for—*Porte*.

How glad I shall be to get back to Germany! All my friends at Vienna, young and old, are well. Love to the sisterhood, and aunt Bab, and hearty wishes to all cronies. I embrace your chum, Lady Balcarres, who, from her fine hotel, taunts my Bulgarian hut. Health and content be amongst you all. Adieu, my trusty friend. God bless you, and send us a happy meeting!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, April 10*th*, 1791.

I WAS ready to *burst* with impatience, six weeks ago, my dear sisters; and by the greatest of all miracles I have not exploded yet, though the retention of ink, on the part of the cabinet of Vienna, leaves us to this hour, full as much in the dark as ever. You plain spinsters have no notion of the delight which Austrian ministers

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sometimes take in indulging a sort of dignified *torpor*, which seems to imply—"My *slumbers* are deep politics —my *lead* is worth other people's gold; I will make all the minor politicians of Europe fidget a little—and *then*, my mouth I will ope,

"And out shall fly a *Trope!*"

These sublime enjoyments are above *your* comprehension, and above mine too; but I dare not *own* it; for we plenipos must always make as *if* we understood even the colic of a prime minister. I shrewdly surmise that the Imperial Trope is *coming*, for—but I will spare you, my dear Anne, a host of very *able* conjectures! *I* am well, *Stuart* is well, my heap of servitors, of all colours, kinds, and countries, are well; for Sistovo, though the seat of caliginous dulness, is the healthiest hole in all Ottoman*dam*. I see a *posse* of pewter-looking piastres beginning to be gathered by my maitre d'hotel. I shall not throw them into the Danube (as you, my dear Anne, seem to suspect,) but you will applaud my having no more regard for them than becomes a beggar of the Keith race. Proud poverty! All Bulgaria should not make me renounce it.

My messenger from England (who has surely been set in the *stocks* somewhere, like Lear's gentleman,) must, I dare say, be now galloping towards me on *yonder* plain in Wallachia, and hurrying duly to join me. But, as said plain is some twenty or thirty leagues broad, without hill or hummock, he may gallop there eight and forty hours to come, before he reaches me. I give him a quarter of an hour longer, else—he shall join the Turkish topers in the Bosphorus?

Ordu Cadissi, late Mollah de la Mecque, sends his compliments to you. He is now studying geography to know where the Baltic is, because as how, people are going to send ships of war there. The Reis Effendi

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seemed a little incredulous t'other day when I talked of that Baltic's carrying cannon now and then on its bosom. I found vouchers, and at length was credited. They *all* know Gibraltar, and that it is a town in *England;* but, my dear Anne, (it is with grief I own it,) not one of the three Turkish missions, consisting of above an hundred bearded men, had ever so much as *heard* of Scotland! Judge of my mortification, t'other day, when in a moment of *jactation*, I boasted of being born in that illustrious, ancient, and powerful kingdom! I bore that stroke, my dear Anne, as a man and a minister *ought to do!*

The Grand Vizier is driving about the shores of the Danube and Black Sea, instilling courage into his myrmidons; and when he sees any reason to doubt of the effect of his eloquence, he now and then cuts off the head of one or t'other chieftain, which assists the instillation mightily. He will cross the Danube, before *you*, in Princes Street, have the least suspicion of it; and then—have at your Suwaroffs, and Kickeroffs, and Assassinoffs, and all the rest of the Ismail *butchers*. I wish I could see these amiable *Christians* get a hearty drubbing, before I dip my pen for the last time, in the oil of olive.

I must go and dress me, for *mine* is the feast of the day. I must, however, tell you beforehand, that in the course of the last week, I have walked on *my own legs*, at least an hundred and fifty—*yards!* Formerly, I only hopped about from one bar of my cage to the other; I shall re-grow an active man by little and little.

Stuart has been exceedingly busy in collecting a *pretty small* family about him in *his* cage. He is already in possession of two weasels, a land tortoise, and a Danube one; three lizards, a speckled toad, a winged snipe, a lame hare, and he is promised (by a Boyar of Wallachia) to have his comforts completed in a few days, by the addition of two *wolf cubs!* All these go

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to bed with him! He is an excellent lad, and will one day do honour to some great monarch as director of his *ménagerie*. *I* am all for the fair *sacks!* and my amour with *white hands* goes on swimmingly!

April 11*th*.

No messenger, which vexes me; but I will amuse you and myself, my dear Anne, by giving you a characteristic trait of the Turkish imagination, which I learned this morning from a German physician, who follows the Congress. A Turkish priest, aged forty and some years, came to him t'other day, complaining of being very *ill*, and thus he explained to the doctor the cause of his illness. "You must know," said the priest, "that above six years and a half ago, as I was coming home in a fine evening, through the streets of this town, a bloody-minded Turk, who owed me a grudge, fired his pistol at me. He happily *missed me*, and as I never saw more of him or his pistol from that day to this, I made light of the whole matter then, and seldom thought of it since. But a month ago, happening to reflect on the danger I then ran, and that I ought to have been deucedly frightened, I have now reasoned myself into that fear which I was foolish enough not to feel when the pistol was fired at me; and I am now sick and miserable in paying the debt of fright which I have so long allowed to be scored up against me."

What say you to that, my dear Anne? This knack of reviving extinct terror is a dangerous prerogative. But I have a mind to try if I can acquire, and render useful, the *reverse* of the priest's nostrum; and while living at Sistovo I am determined to think of some of the pleasantest scenes of my life, some six or ten years ago; and by repassing in idea, all the enjoyment which they *ought* to have afforded me, I will pay, to the last farthing, every debt of rapture, of exquisite feeling, and burning gratitude which any man, woman, or child in

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the universe can possibly have scored up against me. No bad thought, my dear Anne; and the sisterhood, and all my old cronies, and my dear creatures, and my benefactors, and even my flirtations, shall have twenty shillings in the pound, I promise you. Adieu,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistova, April 27th, 1791.

So, my dear Anne, it is your will and pleasure that I should write over again from memory, my nonsensical letter of the 2nd December, which was turned to some ignoble use by an Austrian corporal! Why truly this mandate of yours is something in the Russian style, *exceedingly barbarous*, and next to impossible. But as our political bark is still lying *on her side*, on the sand-bank of Austrian stubbornness, I will do my best to tack together, once more, such small remnants of recollection as the little occurrences of that date have imprinted on a waste leaf of my memory. First then, a happy *rencontre*.

You must know, then, that many of my servitors left Vienna long before me, being to glide down the Danube, with my heavy baggage, in a large covered bark. We had been separated *two-and-thirty days*, and I knew no more about *them* than the man in the moon, when — and here I deplore the loss of my quondam description—at three leagues distance down the river, from the famous fortress of Orsova, and immediately below the tremendous cataracts of the Danube, at the close of day, and on a charming meadow, fast by the river side, I spied my faithful lords of the pantry, kitchen, and confectionery, Duretti, Manzone, and Kaucksdorff, dancing with joy at the approach of their laughing lord! The inferior menials, who were in the *suite* of my courtiers, did not *presume*

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to dance, nor to be vociferous in their congratulations; but they grinned delight, and grunted hilarity, in a very moving manner. These good people, finding their master well, and judging that a dish of warm tea, and a thin slice of bread and butter, might have their charms on the borders of Wallachia (as they used to have at Vienna) had all these materials of enjoyment, ready *cut and dried*—a very proper expression for a basin of tea!—and after this romantic regale, we parted, with mutual embraces, to meet no more till Sistovo.

In a quarter of an hour from thence, we entered into the fertile and fleeced province of Wallachia, and in ten minutes more, we were up to the neck in *mud and mire*, and were dragged through thick and thin for three or four miles; which was performed upon us by all manner of animals; and, in three or four hours time, we reached the human *warren* called the town of Czernetz. I call it "warren," my dear Anne, because the Wallachians are too fond of mother Earth to content themselves with *living on her lap*; but choose to dig their habitations in her *bowels*. Stout carcases, adorned with rags and despondency, distinguished the common people, and long silken robes, with whiskered faces, and sly servility, marked the abject pre-eminence of four or five Boyars, (noblemen) who had wooden booths by way of palaces, in town: and who, in better times looked down with pride from their *stately galleries* before their houses (ten planks of fir deal, supported by six tottering posts) on these miserable ragamuffins of dependents who *burrowed* around them.

With one of these Boyars I lodged, and exchanged six phrases of my Ciceronian learning against five words of his dog Latin. I found I was a considerable loser by the bargain, and sent his Boyarship *to his bed!* So much for itinerary details—now for Trajan's bridge.

Was it built near Czernetz? Was it built of stone?

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Was it built at all? These are three questions about which the learned are divided; but in regard to all three I boldly answer in the affirmative. The Severiner Tower is a massive stout stone building, almost quite entire, between seventy and eighty feet high; and placed there for the defence of the bridge, on the Wallachian side (then called Dacia), against those barbarians. This I *saw* from my windows, and can attest. The miserable deep roads, and the hope of passing that way on my return, and in fine weather, prevented my wading down to the shore *that day*, but my servants, who in their boat passed the place itself (and had my orders to open all their eyes to see distinctly) saw the two stone abutments of the bridge in full preservation. They are about thirty feet high above the water, and are built of large square stones, but without *any* inscription. Universal tradition has convinced every inhabitant of the country that *there* stood *Trajan's*, and *not* Constantine's bridge; for that a *bridge* stood there is incontrovertible. Remains of the piers have been seen at low water, and the Emperor Charles the Sixth had a large wooden pile drawn out of the water at that place, which had already acquired a thin coat of petrifaction. There are models of Trajan's bridge extant; they make the piers *stone*, with a wooden superstructure. Be that as it may, the erection must have been a bold one, for the Danube is there very *deep*, very *rapid*, and four hundred and fifty toises in breadth.

There was another bridge over the Danube, below Nicopolis, at five leagues' distance from hence, where the river Aluta falls into the Danube. Of this one, hardly any vestiges remain; but this second bridge I suppose to be that of Constantine. Heigh ho! my dear Anne, I am quite exhausted with this explosion of *pontifical* literature. I hope I have *be-bridged* you to your heart's content!

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Now, to finish my rakings from the embers of my memory, in regard to my *former* lucubration (which lighted the corporal's pipe instead of finding its way to Princes Street) methinks I told you that the Wallachian jargon at once salutes the ear with such a Roman twang that no man who has studied Ruddiman's Grammar can doubt of their descent (with many mongrel and probably Scythian crosses in the breed) from the proud sovereigns of the world. "A handsome woman," is "formousa mugera;" "I do not understand you, sir," is "no cape domno." In short, they know no other name for their nation but "Rumagni;" and the devil is in it if their genealogy be doubtful. But if the stately Romans could look up and see to what a dastardly race their progeny have been reduced, by Hun, Goth, Scythian, and lastly, Greek bondage, they would spit upon them with scorn. I looked amongst the wretches who ran alongside of my carriage to prevent its being overturned, for Roman features. I thought I saw some Othos, and now and then a Galba; but not a line of a republican countenance to be seen among them! But enough—as this is not my *present* letter, but my *old* letter, I will begin the other on a new sheet.

Having finished, on this blessed 27th of April, my letter to you of the 2nd of last December, I have only one request to make to you, my dear Anne, and for heaven's sake, not to command me to write any more of my nonsense *over again*, for notwithstanding the complete idleness in which I find myself at this *benumbed* Congress, it is the hardest work I ever attempted in my life. My chit-chat may be somewhat palatable at the first seething, but it must be mawkish enough at the second heating. Now that I find myself writing my *present* letter, I feel quite another man, and that you shall see.

This country, I pronounce, is not worth living in, because, I will venture to affirm, that there is not one

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ounce of *genuine love* to be found in the whole extent of Bulgaria. Now, my dear friend, you know that from my cradle upwards, I am Theodosius the Second, "All for love, or the world well lost." I have looked every Turkish man whom I have met deep into the eye, (their ladies I have taken in a different point of view,) and I have not discovered a single ray of that sensibility which melts men's hearts (without impairing in the least their manly courage) into that species of tender cullibility which marries the minds as well as the bodies of the two sexes; and by the happy transfer of authority from the strong to the weak, renders every handsome wife, in our hen-pecked (and consequently blessed) Christendom, the despotic sovereign of her domestic domain. These Mussulmen are made of iron—cold, and rusty iron—they will not bend to happiness; and woman, sweet woman, (that dear, queer, irresistible, and unriddle-able divinity) in their estimation, of little more value or animation than a leg of mutton! I have proved to you on former occasions, my dear Anne, that the Ottoman empire cannot stand long. You are *now* convinced that with such men and women in it, it does not signify a button if it should tumble to shivers to-morrow. I am quite of your mind, in a moral and physical (though not in a *political*) light, and my third observation shall prove why the rulers of cabinets must keep it *on its legs* as long as they can.

If Turkey could tumble *into the sea*, good and well. But, alas! the case is quite otherwise. Every bit that crumbles from its consistency falls into the clutches of a certain northern dame, who has lately fallen into an ugly habit of slaughtering the human race by twenty and thirty thousand at a time, and only for the pleasure of filling a page in a newspaper. I am *bold* to say, that if we allowed that lady to proceed westward, with the same humane propensities, and an

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unconquerable thirst of acquisition, she might at length, become a troublesome neighbour to some of our Christian princes, who are weak enough to think extirpation but a poor amusement. *Ergo*—Selim the Third is to be supported on his sublime sofa; and it has been very properly determined that the said carnivorous lady shall be prevailed upon to make a few retrograde steps into her quondam boundaries. The Ottomans are to be left to *dwindle down* in their own dull way, whilst her ladyship will be at full liberty to cut and carve her native subjects in the manner best suited to her stout appetite.

Thus, my dear Anne, I have enlightened you on a variety of subjects, and in such a manner that you may (and doubtless will) flash Bulgarian information on the minds of all your choice cronies. It only remains for me to request of you to tell their daughters and nieces (for your cronies themselves are somewhat stricken in years) that there is a great man of your kindred, a knight, and privy-councillor, who, with all the bloom of threescore, the wealth of a Keith, and the vivacity of a ripe plenipo, has a formal promise from the Grand Turk to be made a two-tailed pacha (if not a *three*) in the month of June; and who means next year, about the fall of the leaf, to select to himself a pacha-ess, amongst the meekest, mildest, and modestest misses of Caledonia. I foresee, my dear sister, that the throng of candidate damsels will be very great; should it be *enormous*—why tell them for their comfort, that I can obtain from my friend, the mufti, a valid licence (and I speak it not rashly) to bring on my board every day, *three* legs of matrimonial mutton instead of one. Such are the privileges *entailed* on a successful negotiator in the Ottoman empire!

Perhaps you are curious to learn some of those domestic occurrences which peculiarly mark my living and amusements here. Know then, that my principal

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court-yard, containing seventeen feet in length, by eleven and a half in breadth, has, by the united labours of my old and trusty servants, been lately *tortured* into what they are pleased to call an *English garden*. In the above space, with the assistance of two stunted apple trees and one apricot ditto, together with a ragged vine, and three rose bushes, they have furnished me serpentine walks, shady arbours, with a due proportion of lawn and shrubbery.

The great difficulty was—with what to *sow* my garden; as no seed whatsoever was to be found here. These good people at length discovered *two pounds* of mustard-seed in the hands of a Greek merchant: they have sowed the whole premises with that seed, and I trust that with incessant industry, and the fine *growing rains* we have had of late, I shall have as fine a crop of mustard-seed as any *landholder* in Bulgaria! My second gardener, Mr. Jack Ferguson, thanks you kindly for inquiring into his parentage and education. His sire (a lame barber in London) yielded to me this, his only son, as valet-de-chambre, in his *tenth* year, and as he has only served me for *nineteen*, he is the *last come* servant (save one) in my numerous household. We grow old and keep merry *all together*.

April 29*th*.

If any body asks you, my dear Anne, the state of politics here, and that of my personal welfare, you may show them the enclosed beautiful poem, which, I flatter myself, will prove two things. First, that Ovid, who bore his exile in this country in so *dastardly* a manner, was a dirty fellow in comparison with your brother; and, secondly, that the Roman poet did not understand Hugo Grotius half so well as I do.

Adieu, my dear sisters; distribute my kisses and compliments in manner due to all my kindred and cronies, *et vive la Bagatelle!* Adieu.

R. M. K.

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A COPY OF VERSES IN PRAISE OF THE HUMDRUM CONGRESS.

BY A GREAT NEGOTIATOR.

I HEAR it affirmed both by friend and by foe,
That happiness cannot be found here below;
And that to attain it, each mortal must go
With fear and with faith, through the wicket *la haut.*
I boldly assert that the thing is not so,
Since perfect felicity, as I well know,
Is quiet vegetation, as cabbages grow—
With a stomach of iron, and a conscience like snow;
Digesting a peace, and digesting it slow,
That each pithy word may be placed *àpropos,*
In the form of a fence, or a palisade—o
Round the *sine quâ non,* and strict *status quo.*

Thus bless'd *above all,* is the sage Plenipo,
Who scribbles gay nonsense, from dull *Sistovo!*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistovo, May 15*th,* 1791.

OUR political bark, after lying three months on her broadside, is again righted, and happily, my dear Anne, her *bottom* has not suffered in the least. We are now fairly *afloat,* and as soon as the rigging is overhauled, and our provisions put in order, we shall set sail for our blessed harbour, which we shall *certainly reach* in three or four weeks' time. The whole crew is now in good spirits, and the remainder of the voyage will be pleasant and prosperous. Metaphor apart—we *shall* conclude on the 11th of June (when the armistice ends) and our next object must be to *hasten* the exchange of ratifications between the contracting parties, so that we may clench every nail in the edifice, and depart from hence, with *joy and honour,* as soon as we possibly can. It has been a hard and irksome piece of work, my dear Anne,

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but when *Te Deum* is once sung for its creditable conclusion, I shall think all the painful part of my public labours fairly at an end. Our poor Turkish colleagues have felt their heads sit *loose* on their shoulders for the last two months; but the exhilarating and positive assurances we gave them two days ago, have nailed their *noddles* fast again!

How glad I shall be to quit this inhospitable country! which, however, has one excellent quality, that of a wholesome climate. It will be a comfort to me, and I hope an honour, to the end of my days, to have made this strange campaign in politics; and every enjoyment in Christendom will have a double relish from my having passed a winter in a *wooden cage* on a rock in Bulgaria.

I have not yet spoken a *word* to a native of Sistovo, but Stuart (who is an excellent political apprentice, and at the same time a top-hand at making ducks and drakes upon the Danube) assures me that the Turkish boys are extremely *polite* in bringing him flat stones to pursue that favourite amusement. They even permit the said Squire Stuart, and a certain Jack Ferguson, a servitor in my train, to shoot the sparrows in their hedges with all manner of *debonnairity*. Those two traits of the national character of the Mussulmen will have their weight with a damsel of your penetration, and I dare say that you will conclude from thence that a Turkish *laddie* is very like a Scotch *laddie*, bating the *breeks* and the bonnet. Your conclusion is just, my dear Anne, but, as to their women!—I defy any part of the world to produce such "worricows." *

You must know, my dear sister, that I have, from my *hobble-dehoyship* upwards, been reckoned a tolerable connoisseur in female beauty; and as such I promised

* *Anglicé*, scarecrows.

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to display my skill among these Mussul-women. But in order to describe a race of women, I hold it to be a necessary point either to see a few inches of their flesh, or to have a glimpse of their features. Not a hair's-breadth beyond the eye, and the rest of the sack may be filled with alabaster or Newcastle coal, for aught I know. I have told you this before, I believe, but it goes to my heart, and I cannot complain of it too often! As to speech, they have no need of it, for they speak to nobody but their husbands, and what the deuce can they have to say, who have *no ideas?*

I figure to myself a *happy* Turkish couple who have reposed together on one sofa for a dozen years, and worn to very rags their *shreds* of passion, and *crumbs* of conversation, as the consummation of human misery! Not even a chance of strife between them. For I defy the cleverest woman in Turkey to keep up a quarrel with her tyrant even for half an hour, as she has nobody but himself to complain of, or to complain *to*, and is a total stranger to all the degrees of comparison! But I lose my temper; and that is unbecoming in a mediating minister. Therefore no more about those *dowdies;* they are the most untempting females that ever I did—*not* see! Now for a short chapter about *self.*

I am as well as your Tron Kirk with its new coat on. I am as cheerful as any man can be, who sees from his window the desolated plains of Wallachia, and in his court-yard the Janissaries of despotism. By-the-by, these Janissaries are good conditioned sort of gentry, and agree extremely well with *all* my people; nay, though they are grave men, and whiskered men, I saw them t'other day *condescend* to engage with my foot-man in an *amicable* battle with *snow-balls;* when Turkish turbans, and Christian hats, were alternately smitten to the ground with great dexterity.

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There is a serjeant of the Janissaries, a Saracen Turk, of portly stature, and solemn demeanour, who has not smiled these twenty years, and may one day be *Grand Vizier*, for aught that I know. He is a man of authority, who has all the tediousness of an emperor. Yet (we are all *frail*) I saw his serjeantship t'other morning, enjoying a little childish pastime in endeavouring to smother in the snow a poor rat, who had escaped from one of my confectioner's *sweet boxes*.

You see, my dear Anne, how well I describe the Turkish manners and government in furnishing you with "the secrets of the Ottoman empire laid bare to the meanest capacity." I forgot to tell you one important remark I have made, which is that the custom of seeing an old *cobbler* very busy at the corner of every street, is Turkish, as well as Christian; whence you may draw an hypothesis upon the universality of all good customs. The custom, however, of glass to your windows, beds for your bodies, shirts to your backs, or any other instrument for eating (*save fingers*) have not yet reached Bulgaria. They are yet unknown to the *Waiwode!* of whom it is proper you should know, in the first place, that he *farms* this town from the reigning Sultan's third sister, *Hatigé* Sultana, (that's the lady's name,) and pays her ten thousand pounds sterling per annum for pin-money, and the privilege of *fleecing* the inhabitants. I fancy that his worship shears them to the *quick*, and therefore I tell you secondly, (and for your comfort,) that he is dying of dropsy! But alas! another *Waiwode* will *buy them* of our friend *Hatigé*, and shorn they will be, to the *end of the chapter*.

You are so much of a Mahometan, my dear Anne, as to be perfectly acquainted with the penitential moon of Ramazan, in the midst of which we now are. No Mussulman can, during this month, either eat, drink, or smoke tobacco, whilst the sun is above the horizon;

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nay, the abstinence is so rigid, that a Turk dare not wet his parched throat by swallowing his spittle. To encounter these castigations manfully (and particularly the privation of the *pipe*, which to them is the worst of all,) our friends, the plenipotentiaries, have adopted the sage resolution of *sleeping* all day, and indulging their appetites in the night. However, such is the *public spirit* of their Excellencies, that on our proposing to them the renewal of the general conferences, they *nobly* offered to face the *abstemious sun* from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon, three days in every week! You may therefore, my dear sisters, lay your account with our being at the eve of our *signature* by the time this letter reaches Princes Street.

In the mean time, let the newspapers amuse themselves as they have hitherto done, with forging a number of idle tales about our Congress, which, indeed, never had, nor will have, its *fellow*.

Amongst the oddities of it, there is *one* which I must mention. We are (including Turks) eight ministers—men of expense, full of money and of health, and we shall soon have ended our sixth month of residence in Bulgaria; during all which time not one of us has ever set his foot in *coach*, *chaise*, or carriage of *any sort*. Such a *pedestrian* Congress never existed in the annals of modern history!

We have been fed from Vienna, Hermanstadt in Transylvania, Bucharest, and Constantinople; this town producing little else than excellent water and good fish. Our wines have been from all the kingdoms of Europe; our pheasants from Hungary, our capons from Styria, our oranges and lemons from the Islands of Scio and Naxos; and to crown all our *Lucullan* luxury—the King of Naples once sent us a piece of *roasted veal* (true, my dear Anne, though very like a monstrous lie!) from Sorrento, in the neighbourhood

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of Naples.* Ay—and the veal arrived as sweet and good as ever was tasted! You, my dear Anne, have read this paragraph to half a score of your cronies, and not one of them believes it; why, let them come to Sistovo, if they dare,—or go to Sorrento—if they prefer it—to convict me!

But since I am in the humour of telling you marvels, here goes another. We are about a hundred Christians here, (I mean *real* not Greek Christians) and there are five and twenty thousand Turkish inhabitants in Sistovo. Now I pawn my credit, that no one man of us ever held one minute's conversation, or had the smallest grain of social intercourse, with a single *Sistovite*, male or female. The fair *sacks* are now become *brownish* in their garments, instead of jet black. But if any one of us or our attendants dares to boast of having seen with his own eyes, the first hair's-breadth of a Mussulwoman's *nose*, I brand him to the public as a vain-glorious vaunter. A more decorous Congress, therefore, than this has been, the world never saw.

You, my dear Anne, have a few valuable acquaintances in this town, and you will expect some particulars concerning them. The amiable gentleman who stole my Mehmandar's watch and purse, is now chained to a wheelbarrow at Widdin; and your dropsical admirer, the quondam Waiwode, is gone on a visit to the Grand Vizier. You will recollect that I told you, that in proportion as the tympany increased in the carcase of his Waiwodeship, his purse swelled at a monstrous rate by the heavy exactions squeezed from the poor Sistovites. The Grand Vizier (being probably determined to free the Waiwode from both these incumbrances at once) had the goodness to insist on his going to pass a few days in his camp, where both the tappings are now

* What would Sir R. M. Keith's *Maitre d' Hôtel* have thought of salmon and grouse arriving in prime order in the East Indies!

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performing, and I will answer for the success of the *pecuniary* evacuation. My *love* with the white hand has been sent on a pilgrimage to Mecca, to save her from the danger of our mutual passion: which indeed had risen to a most perilous height, especially on *her side*. My faithful Achates, the Honourable Captain William Stuart, desires his love to you. His young wolves have devoured his favourite falcon, and two of his tortoises; his pet fox plays like a kitten, and now and then breakfasts on one of my chickens. His Turkish horse does not run away with him above twice a week. His *chum*, Mehemet, (one of my Janissaries) having gone to the wars, he has taken mightily, of late, to another of these warriors, who is constantly about the house, and who is as proper looking an Ottoman as one can wish to see. Jack Ferguson has purchased a deadly Turkish gun, with which he has slain three—sparrows! and, in short, my dear Anne, we have all been keenly active, every one *in his way*.

May 17th.

My preceding sheet of my own *Keith nonsense* being happily filled with hardly a dash of politics, I am not fool enough to engage this morning in a detail of changes in England, with which you are acquainted two months ere they can reach me. With the assurance (in confidence) that I can be *no loser* by *any* of them, I bid you heartily adieu!

R. M. K.

Huzzah! great joy on Bessy ——'s son and heir! Your letter just arrived.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO THE DUKE OF LEEDS.

Sistova, May 13th.

My Lord,

I am to acknowledge the receipt of your Grace's dispatch, No. 2,* giving me notice that the instrument of his Majesty's full power, containing the Emperor's *title*, had been sent by a messenger to Vienna. Mr. Stratton has duly forwarded it to me by a Prussian courier.

I flatter myself that your Grace's instructions will soon be conveyed to me, relative to the various difficulties which have been started during the course of this negotiation: in regard to which my conduct must necessarily be regulated by the King's commands.

Without troubling your Grace with a recapitulation of all these points, I beg leave to observe that the form and tenor of the future treaty, comprehending an acknowledgment of the Reichenbach Convention as its *basis*, or wholly omitting that acknowledgment; and likewise the King's determination to grant, in *whole or in part*, his guarantee of the said treaty, or to refuse that sanction entirely, are matters of so great importance, that a decision concerning them cannot possibly be supposed to rest in my breast.

My eager impatience to receive these instructions is redoubled by the notification made to us yesterday, by the Austrian ministers, that our business will be resumed in a few days, and will probably be carried on with expedition. Whilst I remain deprived of those

* This No. of itself (the dispatch it alludes to being one of *mere form*) will show, that whether from the indolent apathy which had so long prevailed regarding foreign politics, or the more honourable motive of confidence in a long tried servant of the Crown, Sir R. M. Keith had been left from December to May, without one line from his principal, to direct him in an intricate and important negotiation.

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orders which ought alone to guide my conduct in this weighty business, my situation must be *exceedingly distressing*. Should it unfortunately happen that the King's commands do not come to my hands before the renewal of the general conferences, I have already taken the liberty of informing your Grace (in my preceding letters) that in order to prevent a prolongation of this negotiation, which it is the general interest to bring to a speedy conclusion, I shall conform myself to the measures prescribed by his Prussian majesty to his minister here, in consequence of the explanation and compromise which have taken place between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin.

In pursuing such a line of conduct, I should hope to stand perfectly justified in the eyes of my superiors. But, my lord, there exists one point in which I find myself *obliged* to maintain a direct opposition to the sentiments of my Prussian colleague here, who assures me he has orders to insist peremptorily on an equality of precedence between his sovereign and the King of Great Britain.

In my letters of the 21*st December*, 1790, and the 25th of last March, I made it my earnest request of your Grace to be honoured with the King's commands for the *admission* or *rejection* of that claim, but am still without any answer. Through the kindness of Lord Auckland I am *now* informed that Count Keller, who had set up the same pretensions at the Hague, had thought proper to *withdraw it;* and that, consequently, the precedent Marquis Lucchesini had endeavoured to establish, and to which (as prescribed by your Grace) I should have cheerfully conformed, as a fresh proof of the King's friendship for his Prussian Majesty, is unwarranted.

I shall be extremely sorry if this point (should your Grace's instructions not arrive before the signature) should create at that period, any difficulty, by the

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Prussian minister persisting in a claim, in regard to which it can in *no shape* depend on *me* to depart, even in the smallest degree, from an incontrovertible example, so recently set to us *both* at the Hague.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistova, May 19*th*, 1791.

My Lord,

I had yesterday the honour to receive your lordship's dispatch of the 22nd April, acquainting me that his Majesty had been pleased, upon the resignation of the Duke of Leeds, to intrust the seals of the department for Foreign Affairs to your lordship.

I beg leave to congratulate your lordship on this new proof of his Majesty's favour and confidence. I shall continue to endeavour, by my assiduous zeal for the advancement of the King's service, and punctual adherence to your lordship's instructions, to show myself deserving of your good opinion; and it will be matter of infinite satisfaction to me to be speedily favoured with those orders which are indispensably necessary for my guidance and direction in the present negotiation.

The Austrian minister acquainted us yesterday that they should be ready to meet the Turkish plenipotentiaries on Thursday next, in Congress, and they invited us (the mediating ministers) to a previous and separate conference on Wednesday. From the language held to us by the Imperial ministries (since the arrival of their instructions from Vienna) we have the best reason to believe that they are charged to carry on our negotiation in an amicable and expeditious manner; and their personal dispositions appear to correspond

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perfectly with these directions. We take it for granted that the substance of the definitive treaty which they are authorised to propose in Congress, will be strictly consonant to the spirit (and even letter) of the Convention of Reichenbach. The only points on which we presage some difficulty, are the length of time they mean to allow for the exchange of ratifications: and (as the Prussian letters from Vienna hint) a subsequent term of *two months* for the evacuation of Wallachia, &c. It may easily be conceived that the interests of the Porte will naturally induce plenipotentiaries to employ their utmost efforts to shorten the duration of both.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, May 19th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the conference yesterday between the mediating ministers and those of Vienna, Baron Haeften made known to us that in pursuance of the orders sent to him and his colleague from Vienna, he would in the general meeting of the Congress (as this day) read to the mediators in French, and to the Ottomans in the Turkish language, the whole of the proposed treaty, containing eighteen articles, such as it had been sent to them. That he wished to put the Ottomans in complete possession of the entire treaty *at once;* that their remarks, their possible objections, or unreserved acquiescence, might be the result of complete information. The mediators joined with the Imperialists in opinion that the communication of the entire treaty in the first place, would greatly facilitate the sequel of the negotiation. But they thought it, however,

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necessary to stipulate that the silence of the Ottoman plenipotentiaries between the reading of each article, should in no shape be construed as an approbation or acquiescence on their part; and that the agreement to hear the whole treaty to an end at *one sitting*, should not impair in the smallest degree, their unquestionable right of debating, impugning, or finally rejecting, any one of the articles which should seem to them inadmissible. This point being agreed to on the part of the Austrian minister, we gave the Ottomans *precise* information of our previous *reserve in their favour*, of every possible right pertaining to their ministerial character.

The Congress met this morning, and the whole treaty, of which I send your lordship inclosed a *complete* and *authentic* copy, was read, article by article, in French and in Turkish. The Ottomans made no observations whatever on its contents, but declared they would take them into consideration, and give notice to the mediators when they should be ready again to meet them in Congress.

The treaty, my lord, contains *much new matter*, but I shall not presume to make any hasty commentary on it. Your lordship will judge in how far its tenor requires the *most speedy* conveyance of directions and instructions to *me*. Should they, unhappily, not arrive before the time at which the signature of peace may appear to his Prussian Majesty *absolutely necessary for the good of the common cause*, I am confident that your lordship will think me perfectly justifiable in regulating my conduct by the directions which that monarch shall send to his minister here; provided they do not contradict my *original*, and hitherto *sole* instructions. But even in this case, of my being obliged to sign the treaty without any new order from your lordship, I shall hold it my duty to sign, as mediator, *sub spe rati*.

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After the Turks had left the Congress chamber, we remarked to Baron Herbert that in the eighteenth article, no sort of mention was made of the future ratifications of the mediating powers, or their exchange, as had been the practice in *all* treaties, even where no guarantee was granted. Baron Herbert said, that in his orders from Vienna that point was wholly omitted. That he would therefore transmit this day to Prince Kaunitz the very proper remark we had made, and expect by *return of post* the Prince's answer.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistowo, May 20th.

My Lord,

The messenger Shaw delivered into my hands at eleven o'clock last night your lordship's dispatch No. 3, which, I presume, ought to have been marked No. 2, as I have received * no official dispatch since your No. 1, dated on the 22nd April. I feel myself essentially indebted to your lordship for the very clear and ample instructions which that dispatch contains; and you may rely on my exerting the utmost efforts of zeal and assiduity in pursuing the important objects which they give me in charge.

I must crave your lordship's indulgence for confining myself, by this day's post, to the bare acknowledgment of these directions, as it will be necessary for me to have more than one conversation with my colleagues in the mediation, before I can collect such lights in

* It is impossible to avoid contrasting the *three dispatches* within as many weeks (and those too immediately on entering upon a new and extensive office), of Sir R. M. K.'s "new principal"—with the *none in five months* of his predecessor.

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respect to the actual sentiments of their Courts, and the tenor of their *latest* orders, as can enable me to lay before your lordship a fair state of the means to be employed, and of the degree of co-operation I have to expect from these ministers, in carrying the King's orders into effect. I am in hopes that in a day or two, a messenger from Berlin will bring to my Prussian colleague fresh instructions, in consequence of Mr. Ewart's commission; as also letters to me from that gentleman, with such information relative to the *present* wishes of the Prussian Cabinet as will be of great advantage to me. In the meantime I enclose to your lordship a copy (sent to me by Monsieur Lucchesini, not an hour ago) of Prince Kaunitz's dispatch to Prince Reuss; and your lordship will see what a *wide field* for debate and negotiation may be laid open to it, should Prussia adopt it, as the ground-work of a claim to *equivalent compensation.*

[Human patience (at least as dealt out to any, save mediating ministers) would fail in pursuing, as well as any, save diplomatic slaves of the lamp, would shrink from tracing the windings of that maze of novel subtleties in which Austrian chicane sought, in the renewed conferences, to entangle the dogged, but far more honest disciples of Mahomet. And when the object of these manœuvres, worthy of the Jesuit-education of their author, is seen to be some petty deviation in the proposed line of frontier between the empires, a matter of "sport," or at least little moment, to the Emperor, while its concession might have been "death" to the poor trembling Turkish negotiators—their new-born firmness (the result of desperation) and the care of the mediators not to see them over-reached, while the faith of their own Courts was pledged for fair and equal dealing, can alone reconcile any one to the details of *days* of dismal litigation, the salient points of which

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(in justice to one doomed, as best he might, to *sit them out*) must be very briefly given.—Ed.]

On May 23rd, Sir R. M. Keith thus writes:—

"The Turks are preparing a *strong protest* against the Austrian claims beyond the *status quo*, and think *that the safety of their heads* depends on bringing it forward, even before they receive first orders from the Sultan. Your lordship will see (from Sir Robert Ainslie's dispatches) how very averse the Porte is to any prolongation of the armistice. My Prussian colleague is not less so." [On May 24th a fresh combustible was cast into Congress by a supposed infraction of *neutrality* on the part of a Turkish commander, which cost the mediators an express and remonstrance to Constantinople, and was of course made the most of by the Austrians.

This point settled, by a strong disclaimer on their part of all ideas of clandestine hostility, the Turks entered on a manly and nearly unanswerable repudiation of the new stipulations of the proposed treaty.] "This gave rise," says Sir Robert, "to a long and sharp altercation; and Baron Herbert entered on an artful but feeble and prolix deduction of what he termed the just foundation of those claims. All this was drawn out to immoderate length, and more than over-balanced by observations (not very apposite) from Count Esterhazy."

[Nor would even its brief and masterly summary, however necessarily inflicted on Lord Grenville, at all interest even the political reader. After many a rejoinder, and many a digression, from which the mediators had all the trouble in the world in bringing the parties back, they were requested by the Turks to give *their* opinion as to the compatibility of the Austrian demands with the principle of the strict *status quo*.]

"The mediators, however," adds Sir Robert, with his usual wisdom and temper, "thinking that after a sitting

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of four hours, and whilst the minds of the ministers of the contracting parties were *not a little heated*, a further discussion to which this answer must necessarily give rise, would be little conducive to the main object of conciliation, desired time to compare the treaties in question, and to weigh the arguments on both sides before they gave an answer."

It will not be wondered that the very letter of May 29th (acknowledging the receipt of *another dispatch*) contains this *bit of cypher* :—

"I find it a difficult task to prevent misunderstandings; but I shall exert every effort *in my power* to prevent the negotiation being *again suspended*."

On the 30th, Sir Robert thus reports—

"The mediating ministers, having *jointly* drawn up a *written* answer (of which I send a copy,) to the reference made to us by the Ottoman ministers, we thought it highly expedient to hold a short conference on Saturday with the Austrians, previous to the meeting in Congress. We sought the opportunity of employing our good offices, and the most persuasive arguments we were masters of, in the language of friendly expostulation to engage those ministers to adhere, much more strictly than they had done in the minute of the proposed treaty, to the *status quo ante bellum*, which the Turks had adopted (under a convention guaranteed by our three Courts as the rigid measure of reciprocal restitution, and renewal of all antecedent engagements."

Then follow the technical arguments, unintelligible without maps, and of the most merely *local* interest, yet conclusive, in their manly straightforwardness, to the meanest capacity.

"To these reasonings," continues Sir Robert, "Baron Herbert opposed nothing, I am sorry to be under the necessity of declaring—but the most flimsy and ill-grounded subterfuges; and these too, urged with a

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degree of intemperate heat, both in expression and manner, which little became his ministerial functions. The mediators made to those futile and acrimonious allegations, the calm and dignified reply which they called forth. To put a stop to such unsuitable proceedings, I thought proper to show that the *note verbale* of Prince Reuss, and the answer delivered to it by the Court of Berlin, had fixed, by mutual agreement, the *status quo ante bellum*, as the *sole* rule here, in respect to *restitution*."

When Baron Herbert had read both these papers, (as given him by Count Lucchesini,) he said, (and I am desirous even to soften his expressions) "that no ministerial offices between his Court and Prussia, nor any arguments deduced by the mediation, could have weight in his opinion, or influence on his conduct! That he and his colleague (who had maintained a perfect silence) acted under special and unalterable orders from their Court, and that they would not proceed to the article of restitution of conquests, till their demands, (being a *sine quâ non* of the conclusion so much wished for) should be granted." Our conference thus ended without the smallest effect.

The mediators, being resolved to fulfil, without exception, every duty of their conciliatory functions, held a separate conference with the Ottomans, immediately after. We communicated to them the ill success of our conversation with the Austrians, and recommended them to take into consideration the situation of their affairs, together with the *very* short duration of the armistice; in order to have their answer prepared to the positive language they would soon hear employed in the Congress chamber, by the Imperial plenipotentiaries.

The Turks expressed surprise and concern, but showed a considerable degree of firmness. They said they would *hear* the Austrians, and draw from the peremptory

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declaration they had expressed themselves ready to make *in writing*, what they might have to send to the Grand Vizier, and to the Porte; but that they would offer no reply in the approaching general conference.

It passed, of course, in useless *reiteration* on Baron Herbert's part, of "not receding a *hair's breadth*," and in silence on that of the Turks—while the mediator concludes his dispatch. "Such, my lord, is the state of our negotiation, which is drawing very fast to a decisive crisis."

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistova, May 30*th.*

My Lord,

In obedience to the very ample instructions which have been forwarded to me from Berlin by a Prussian courier, I have concerted everything with my Prussian colleague, in exact conformity to the directions which have been sent to us *in common*. I shall send back Sir Robert Ainslie's janissary the day after to-morrow to Constantinople, with Mr. Ewart's letter to his Excellency, accompanied with all the lights which my pen can throw on the subjects in question. I venture to assure your lordship that the utmost circumspection as well as diligence, will be employed by Marquis Lucchesini and me in pursuance of every object which we have in charge. We agree perfectly in opinion, both in regard to these matters themselves and to the most proper manner of treating them. It has been at the earnest request of that minister that I have deferred the proposal in Congress, of a short prolongation of the suspension of arms. We received by courier, on Friday night, explicit orders from his Prussian Majesty, to declare, in the name of that monarch, that he has the

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firmest reliance on the Emperor's promise to restore *all* his conquests, *without exception;* and he therefore expects and requires the most rigid adherence to the principles of the *status quo ante bellum.* This instruction, which my Prussian colleague intends to fulfil to-morrow (but with as little harshness as possible), will drive the Austrians to the necessity of yielding, or of asking time to obtain fresh orders from Vienna. In the latter case, the proposal of a prolongation must come from them; and the blame of a new protraction will lie solely at their door.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*By Prussian Messenger.*]

Sistovo, June 4th, 1791.

My Lord,

I have reserved for this conveyance of a Prussian messenger the report of what has passed here in the last few days. On Wednesday, Marquis Lucchesini went *alone* to wait on Count Esterhazy and Baron Herbert, separately, to give them notice in the most polite terms, and in a confidential manner, that unless they were authorised to recede from the new pretensions set up in the minute of the treaty, he should find himself under the disagreeable necessity of *opposing their admission,* by executing the express order of his sovereign, and making a formal declaration in Congress (to the effect mentioned in my last letter of 30th May) that his Majesty, relying implicitly on the Emperor's formal engagement, and recent promise to restore *all* his conquests at the peace, without *any exception whatever,* did now expect and require that everything should be concluded in exact conformity with the *status quo ante bellum.*

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The Austrian ministers, each in his way (Count Esterhazy as a frank and liberal gentleman, Monsieur Herbert as an old practitioner in litigious politics) expressed their sense of the attention paid to them by the Prussian minister, in giving them in so obliging a manner, this previous information of a resolution on the part of his sovereign which could not fail to give them great concern. Each of these ministers concluded by assuring Marquis Lucchesini that they acted under peremptory orders, and could not recede an inch from the demands of their Court.

This important step being taken by the Prussian minister, we had reason to expect that the conference on Thursday would prove exceedingly interesting.

[*By Prussian Courier.*]

June 7th, 1791.

My Lord,

The vexatious incidents in our negotiation here have been so rapid and unexpected, within these three days, that the short interval between the conferences does not at present admit of my entering into minute details of those proceedings. I shall send your lordship in a few days the complete protocols. In the meantime, I can only express my sincere concern for the unfortunate turn which those affairs have suddenly taken, and beg your indulgence for restricting myself to the succinct Journal of the Congress.

In the night of Sunday a Tartar courier, from Constantinople to the Reis Effendi, brought me a letter from Sir Robert Ainslie, which I transmit in its original for your lordship's information. Letters of the same import were sent to my Prussian colleague.*

* In explanation of this, and the preceding letter, it may be mentioned, that the ministers of Great Britain and Prussia at *Sistove* were at this time *jointly* and actively employed in accelerating *at the Porte*, the peace between Turkey and *Russia*.

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We spoke before the opening of the Congress to Prince Morusi, chief dragoman of the Porte, who assured us that the orders brought to the Turkish plenipotentiaries were as peremptory *as possible*. We begged of him to prepare the Ottomans to listen to the request of the mediators, that they would consent to a short prolongation of the armistice, as a mark of consideration which the allied Courts had a right to expect from the Porte. This he promised to do, but without foretelling the least probability of success.

When all parties were met in Congress, the Turks began by repeating their hopes that the Austrians would, at length, give way to the incontrovertible arguments they, the Turks, had alleged.

Baron Herbert (who, for the last ten days, has assumed a high and dictatorial tone) replied by a haughty negative. This was followed by an acrimonious litigation (too long to be repeated), in which the Turks had the *better* in every argument.

Baron Herbert was once more asked by the adverse party, why, if the Emperor had any remaining rights (beyond the renewal of all treaties, &c.), he had not reserved them in the original convention, or, at least, brought them frankly forward at the commencement of the negotiation?

The Baron (ever fond of immortalising *his* State papers) produced another writing, of which I send an exact copy (marked A.)

In the course of a few minutes each of the contending parties reached the utmost limits of their instructions; the Austrians declaring that they would not recede an inch from their demands, and the Ottomans rejecting with determined resolution, all these new pretensions. At this stage of the business, and when the Turks had already made a motion to put an end to the conference, Monsieur Lucchesini found himself under the necessity

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of delivering, and entering in the Protocol the declaration, in his sovereign's name, which he had so frequently announced (B.) In concluding this ministerial office, the Prussian Envoy addressed himself to Baron Haeften, and to me; claiming our concurrence, in virtue of the guarantee of the *status quo*.

I professed, in a few conciliatory phrases, my most earnest desire to fulfil with unabated zeal every duty of a mediator, and my unalterable reliance on the just and liberal principles of *all the Princes* who had a share in these engagements, or in our negotiation for the restoration of a peace so important to both empires, and which had been brought so nigh to a conclusion. I then read and delivered to the Secretary of the Congress the short declaration here inclosed (marked C.)

Baron Haeften added (by word of mouth) two or three sentences, which I have extracted from the Journal and enclosed (marked D.)

The Austrian ministers then proposed to retire to their chamber and prepare an answer in writing, which they did; and I join that reply to the enclosure (marked E.)

After this the same strong (and even hard) negatives were repeated by each of the principal parties. When I saw that all hope of accommodation by our amicable intervention in *public conference* was at an end, I claimed the right of the mediation to hold immediate and separate meetings with the ministers of each empire. This was agreed to—the parties separated, and we went first to the Austrians. I made known to them the deep concern with which we saw the hope of peace vanishing, in an unaccountable manner, by a total change of language on the part of their Court. We found the Imperialists from the first moment, *utterly averse* to the extension of the armistice, and notwithstanding all that Monsieur Lucchesini and Baron Haeften could allege in support

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of my arguments, both Baron Herbert and Count Esterhazy repeated, and gave in writing, that unless the Turks would formally accept the first *seven* articles of the proposed treaty (containing all the cessions in favour of Austria) they had no authority whatever to agree to any prolongation of the armistice.

I then laid aside the tone of ministerial conference, and the use of a secretary (for all the above long convention was committed to writing), and addressed myself as an individual to the Imperialists to press the matter home to them, as men employed in the salutary work of peace. They then owned to us in *confidence* (and in their private capacity only), that they had authentic information of positive orders having been given to the Austrian generals in Wallachia, and on all the Turkish frontiers, to remain *entirely on the defensive, even after the expiration of the armistice.*

I asked them if they would authorise me to make a declaration of *this,* as from them, and with a view to engage the Turks to give similar and strict orders throughout their whole army (as at Passarowitz, when the whole peace had been negotiated without any formal suspension of arms.)

The Imperialists declared that they would have *no such proposition* carried in *their name* to the Turks. Yet they did justice to our motives, and said that such an intervention would well become our public and private characters.

With this feeble (but last) expedient we went to the Ottomans, and used all our eloquence to bring them to be the proposers of the prolongation of armistice, thinking that in this form the proposition might be accepted by the others.

But this the Turks resolutely refused; affirming that their orders were positive to listen to no proposal of that nature—that their right was clear, the duplicity of their

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adversary undeniable; that the Porte would be no longer the dupe of Austrian tergiversation; that they, according to the spirit of these instructions, and nature of their Government, must obey implicitly, and possessed no right of mitigating the purport of express commands.

In the last extremity, we told the Turks that we, the mediators, would apply directly to the Grand Vizier through Colonel Goetze, to obtain an effectual, though not formal suspension of hostilities for a short time. They agreed to send a Tartar with our letter, but would not take upon them to prognosticate a favourable reply!

We appointed another general conference for to-day, and put an end to the laborious work of *seven hours* of ineffectual efforts to fulfil the orders of our sovereign, and serve the cause of humanity.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*No. 62.—By Prussian Messenger.*]

Sistova, June 7th.

My Lord,

My preceding No. was written with the intention of forwarding it by this day's post, but the violent proceedings of the Austrian ministers in the meeting of this morning having made it absolutely necessary for the Prussian minister to dispatch a messenger to Berlin, I shall send by him these two letters, to be forwarded to Whitehall should any *safe opportunity* occur, if not, to be taken up by the messenger Shaw, whom I shall send off to England on Thursday night, with the result of the last conference (at least for a time) of this Congress.

The conference of this morning was opened by a few words I made use of to express my ardent wish that in a chamber dedicated to pacification, the work of this

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day might forward the attainment of that most desirable object. The Ottomans offered to sign the peace instantly, conformably to the *status quo*, and appealed to the justice of the Supreme Being for the truth of their uniform adherence to *one principle;* calling, at the same time, for the wrath of Heaven to punish those who had swerved from that straight line of conduct.

Similar reproaches were bandied back and forward several times, when Baron Herbert produced from his inexhaustible pocket a paper, a copy of which I inclose. I have only to remark, that the words in it, "*Sans rompre le Congrès,*" were added to the original on my representation. We told them we would consider its purport a few minutes, and the Imperialists left us.

We sent for the dragoman of the Porte, Prince Morusi, to give him notice of the resolution taken by the Austrian ministers to return to Bucharest on Thursday; and we desired him to inquire and to inform us what answer the Ottomans would give to such a declaration, which (though highly disagreeable at the present moment) was conformable to precedents established by European Powers at various Congresses.

He brought us back more than one Oriental idea, conceived by the Turkish ministers; the last and most feasible of which was, that they would repair to the Congress chamber every day of the remaining *four*, till the expiration of the armistice. That on the last of those days, if they had not the pleasure of meeting the Austrians in Congress, they would deposit in the hands of the mediators their final declaration, and appeal to *all Europe*. The Turks being exceedingly *tenacious* of this idea, we acquiesced in it.

Being again assembled in Congress, M. Herbert read his farewell paper, and M. Lucchesini the above mentioned note. At the conclusion of the latter, I spoke these words, "Comme ministre médiateur, je ne puis

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qu'exprimer et nourrir les mêmes espérances." Baron Haeften expressed the same hopes. Thus ended the business of the day, leaving us little hope of a favourable issue. Happy shall I be to announce a better understanding between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, till when our present labours must remain suspended.

I beg leave to add one remark, which I am confident is well founded. The Congress of Sistovo has for the last two months and more, been turned to various purposes by the secret ascendancy of the higher powers, and their negotiators have been mere *puppets*. I am persuaded your lordship has already turned an eye to Petersburgh for all the springs which gave rise to so many desultory directions, and have now put a stop to our motions.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, June 9th, 1791.

My Lord,

At the same time that I cannot help deploring the prospect now before us, of an unhappy termination of our negotiation, owing to the unjustifiable conduct of the cabinet of Vienna—the respect I owe to the character and dignity of their sovereign must restrain my pen from going too deep in my conjectures respecting the motives which engaged that monarch to permit his prime minister to *deviate so widely* as he has done from the stipulations of Reichenbach, in the unwise management of the negotiation.

Your lordship sees from high and advantageous ground, every source of the Austrian tergiversations. *I* severely feel their baneful effects here, and can only fulfil my duty by describing them *faithfully*, and making

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a report of all the ineffectual measures which I myself have employed (in conjunction with my colleagues in the mediation) to prevent, or at least retard, those effects.

The expectations which were naturally formed, in consequence of the high compliment which our royal master paid to the Emperor, by the mission of Lord Elgin to Florence, received additional strength from the tenor of that letter from his lordship, a copy of which his Prussian Majesty sent to his minister here. But, in as far as I can judge, by what has passed at Sistovo, the part which the Emperor chose to embrace, after giving audience to Lord Elgin, was to order his supposed claims on the Porte to be *carried through* with the *highest hand*, and to break up the Congress, by a flat refusal of all prolongation of armistice, if the Turks remained *firm* in claiming the strict *status quo*.

Your lordship is best judge whether or not this determination, and its *headlong execution*, be of a piece with the language which his Imperial Majesty was pleased to hold to Lord Elgin, either during the period of his mission at Vienna, or during the first days of his lordship's late visit to Florence.

Certain it is, and all my colleagues can vouch for it, that from the moment Prince Kaunitz could form a tolerable guess respecting the objects of Lord Elgin's last journey—he redoubled the haughtiness and inflexibility of his instructions to Baron Herbert; and not even the terms of diplomatic decency were any longer observed in the style dictated (or at least suggested) to this minister in his language and correspondence, whenever they were addressed to the ministers of Prussia.

As an unquestionable proof that Prince Kaunitz adopted this plan at the *time* I have mentioned, I beg your lordship to remark, that, on the *second* of May, Lord Elgin set out from Vienna, and on the *seventh*

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Prince Kaunitz delivered to Baron Jacobi the *note verbale*, in which the boundless extent of a *status quo*, "tel qu'il était, ou DEVAIT ÊTRE," is expressed and adopted by the Austrian ministry, and has since been the ground-work of all their reasonings at Sistovo. All this might have passed for the effects of old age and passion. But we have it now, in a *note* presented by Baron Herbert in Congress, that every step of his proceedings, and all the peremptory demands he has brought forward, have been *approved and confirmed from Florence*. After this, my lord, it becomes an humble individual like me to leave to his superiors to make such observations, and draw such inferences as the facts point out.

The Turks are not to be *forced* into concession, and all regard for the Reichenbach engagements is laid aside. The confidential intercourse between Baron Herbert and the Russian commanders in Moldavia is to be more closely pursued; and perhaps the cause of Russia is to be served more and more effectually at the expense of Austrian *neutrality*, in virtue of the very convenient phrase "*ou doit être!*"

On the other hand, my lord, it cannot be doubted that besides all the ministerial offices which passed between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, a more *direct* and private explanation took place between the two monarchs themselves; which satisfied the mind of his Prussian Majesty that all must end well and *loyalement* at Sistovo.* I have myself *seen* more than one dispatch signed by the King of Prussia in *April* and *May*, in which he makes light of every suspicion hinted by his minister at this Congress, and assures him that he (the King) has *particular* reasons for placing entire confidence in the good faith and candour of his Imperial

* His own expressions (in a letter from Mr. Ewart to Sir R. Keith), were "*Ma parole est sacrée.*"

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Majesty. Lord Elgin's letter from Florence found his Prussian Majesty still adhering to this persuasion and confidence. His orders to Monsieur Lucchesini express the full expectation that all difficulties must have been removed by orders *from Florence*. How the King of Prussia will feel when he learns the transactions of the last six days here, I cannot pretend to foretel.

The conference of this morning having lasted much longer than was expected, my earnest desire to send off the messenger, Shaw, this evening to London, obliges me to comprise in a narrow space the account of what passed at that meeting, and the rather, as all the principal points were treated in writing, and that the copies of all these ministerial notes inclosed, will give your lordship all the necessary information.

Previous to the opening of the Congress, the Ottoman ministers begged of the mediators to join them in their chamber. There they read to us the declaration they were to make; protesting to us once more, that their orders were *absolute* to hold such language and *no other*. Some of the phrases, which appeared to us too harsh, were softened, at the request of the mediators; but without impairing in any degree (a point on which the Turks were extremely tenacious) the *force and precision* of their *entire rejection* of all the Austrian demands, beyond the strict *status quo*.

When the Congress was assembled, Monsieur Lucchesini thought it incumbent on him to deliver in writing his remarks (inclosed No. 1) on the present situation of the negotiation. To this note Baron Herbert replied by the inclosure (No. 2). The dragoman of the Porte then read the declaration of the Ottoman ministers (inclosed No. 3). I studied the looks of the Imperial ministers (particularly Baron Herbert) during the public reading of it, and I thought I could perceive in the countenance of the latter,

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much surprise and not a little *uneasiness*, at finding the Turks *coolly determined* to run all hazards rather than cede any part of what Austria had demanded.

Baron Herbert and his colleague retired to prepare an answer, and the Baron's pen (on other occasions so prolific) brought forth with long labour the counter-declaration (No. 4). When he had read and delivered it in Turkish, the conference drew to an end.

I therefore seized the opportunity of saying, in the name of all the mediators, that we felt with real affliction, the actual situation of our affairs. But, exhorting all parties to redouble their endeavours to recover the road of pacification, I expressed our sanguine hope of seeing the negotiation again resumed, and speedily, in the same chamber, and with the most desirable success in restoring tranquillity to both empires. These wishes were echoed from all quarters; and there the conference ended.

Ten minutes of total silence ensued, during which time the Secretary of the Congress copied Baron Herbert's note, and when that was done, the Imperial ministers got up to retire, making a civil compliment to the Ottomans, and manifesting their wishes to return soon to this place.

The Turks remained on their *sofas without moving;* and their dragoman said in their name, that they would continue in the place of Congress, in hopes of a more happy moment. The Austrians desired a short conference with the mediators, in which (after many personal compliments to us) they charged us to assure the Ottoman ministers of their perfect esteem and sincere gratitude for all the attentions they have met with here. The Austrians then set out on their journey, and are to sleep this night at Simnitza, a Wallachian village on the other side the Danube; they will proceed to Bucharest to-morrow.

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We then returned to the Congress chamber, where the Turkish plenipotentiaries remained *immoveably* seated, as a proof that *they* had no hand in interrupting the business of the Congress.

I will not take up your lordship's time with rash surmises on what may be foreseen from these hours of *crisis*. That the Austrians were greatly *disappointed* by the conduct of the Porte, was *evident* beyond a doubt.

May the cabinet of Vienna learn from hence that justice and wisdom are almost synonymous terms, and square their future conduct accordingly!

The position of the mediating ministers here will become exceedingly difficult, and even precarious, after the departure of the Imperialists, unless their speedy return be *more* than probable. But I beg your lordship to remain assured, that my sole object (all personal comforts or conveniences being wholly out of the question) shall be to pursue the pacific negotiation with assiduity and perseverance, as long as the last shred of it remains within my sight. I shall continue here (at all events) till I see whether your lordship has any fresh order for me respecting the peace between the Porte and Russia.

Should unfortunately (and I still say very improbably) the sword be again drawn between the Austrians and Turks, I shall be forced to retire to Hermanstadt, in Transylvania, being the nearest Imperial town out of the immediate theatre of hostility. But in every other case I shall certainly not quit Sistovo till the Prussian minister has orders to do so, in consequence of the entire dissolution of the Congress.

Your lordship will easily conceive with what impatience a man, in my present situation, must look for the return of your commands by a messenger, who will learn from Mr. Stratton, at Vienna, where I am to be found. I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. KEITH.

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[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 9th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I yesterday received and forwarded your very interesting dispatches of the 18th and 20th May.

Without a chart to explain the 6th Article of Baron Herbert's project, and without more knowledge of the topography of the Turkish frontiers than I possess, I cannot frame any idea of the intrinsic value of this new demand. I am content, therefore, to admire in silence "*la distinction si belle et si neuve d'un* status quo *strict de droit et de fait, qui se modifie l'un par l'autre !*" You will do me the justice to recollect, that I foretold to you, so long ago as last December, that you must expect "*quelque tour d'escamotage de cette espèce.*" And I did not believe it the less, because Prince Kaunitz was at the time assuring us that such a proposition would never be brought forward as a pretension, but would only be suggested, subject to one previous occurrence, and *au bon gré des Turcs*. I equally admire the timing of this demand so critically at the close of the armistice. As to the point itself, unless the districts demanded are of essential and solid importance to the Porte, I heartily hope that they may be ceded with the best grace possible. It is worth some sacrifice in this business, as it has been in some others, to unmask the characters and principles of those with whom we have to do in this world. There is a moral justice in politics which, sooner or later, brings a day of retribution. I sincerely wish, therefore, that the Turks may have accepted the project with such modifications or corrections as they can obtain. If, in return, they require that all the new works constructed in their fortified places to be restored by the Austrians be left untouched, it would be reasonable

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and would, I think, be granted. I wish to God you were clear of Sistovo, and once more at the fountain-head of all these little manœuvres! You must be sick to death of your Turkish village!

Monsieur Lucchesini had written to Monsieur Henfner at this place, on the subject of his strange pretension about signature;* I imagine that Henfner's answer will quiet him. A circumstance somewhat of a similar nature happened at Madrid under the late and present Kings of Spain. The ambassadresses go at the same time to Court, and to Court ceremonies; but they are received separately and singly. It was necessary, therefore, to decide between the English and the Sardinian, and the decision was given in favour of the former, and strictly maintained; the latter being a crowned head only of the present century.

Adieu, my dear Sir Robert. I expect in five or six days the first messages from Petersburgh. I trust that that after *competent* delays, we shall end in a general pacification *somehow*. I recommend this to Mr. Stratton, who discharges your functions ably and satisfactorily.

Yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

MR. TREVOR† TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Turin, June 7th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have already desired Lord Elgin to say everything kind to you from me, and I cannot let my old, and your present *confrère*, Marquis Gallo, return to Vienna without renewing the same assurances. I flatter myself that from all I hear, you will soon be released

* The claim resisted by Sir R. Murray Keith, for precedence, or even exact equality on the part of the King of Prussia and his own Sovereign.

† Son to Lord Hampden, British Minister at Turin, and a friend of Sir R. M. Keith. This letter is full of curious prognostics.

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from your honourable prison, your piastres, and pillaw. I hope that the late separation of ministers was only that of *persons;* and that the principles of the negotiation remain entire and compact; *et qu'on n'a reculé que pour mieux sauter,* quand *Sémiramis** sera prête à sauter aussi. There is, however, a strange report at present in the mouth of ministers, which I mention without believing; it is that French money has found its way into the Divan, and that its sinister effects are visible in the present conduct of the Turks. But what would the Allies say if they perceive this manœuvre? and what would become of the Porte if the Allies were to abandon her? That France—*i.e.*, the National Assembly, should attempt this, I think very likely. Their present anarchical system can only subsist by the folly or misfortune of others; not that in any case, so baseless and visionary a fabric can long exist, and doubtless the term of its duration is already assigned.

As to a plan of confederacy against the revolution, among the different powers of Europe (which the Artois party so fondly persuade themselves of,) your able judgment will know much better than I do, how difficult, if not impracticable, that would be. Not but there are several whose interests and wishes, some from hope, and some from fear, would induce them to be of this *pique nique.* Spain and this country,† I take to be of that number; but alas, we are here far from being in a situation to attack others. This country will have enough to do to prevent the flames catching its own roofs, and could ill afford to send its pumps and firemen to the assistance of its neighbours; who, by the by, desire no such assistance, and

Invitum qui servant idem facit occidenti.

You know best whether your wise and cautious

* The Empress of Russia. † Sardinia.

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sovereign* is disposed to lead down this dance. *Ces diables de Jacobins nous donneront tous du fil à tordre;* and I fear all Europe sooner or later, will feel the effects of this moral and political earthquake. Great Britain I look upon as honoured with their peculiar hatred, because it is the wisest and happiest government in the world; and I have heard some instances of their mischievous and impertinent intrigues in England, that, though I have too good an opinion of the wisdom and firmness of government, and of the good sense of the people in general, to be alarmed, I should not be surprised if, before you received this, some violent tumults and disturbances should have been at least attempted.

The modern madness is said to have gained several thousand heads in London, who were disposed to celebrate the commemoration of the 14th July with national *cockades, flags,* &c., and what say you to a ship loaded with those articles having actually been discovered *en contrebande,* and *coulé à fond* at sea? In short, my dear Sir Robert, these are much more eventful and historic times than I should have wished to live in; and one need have all your philosophy and good humour to bear them patiently.

But, enough; the pleasure I have in chatting with you makes me forget how unmercifully I abuse your patience. So, with all good wishes for your health and happiness, and with entreaties to let me hear from you,

I remain your faithful and affectionate,

J. T.

P. S.—You will have heard, I hope, the important event of the French King's flight and recapture, without passing through all the stages of false hopes and fears, to which we here have been exposed by the *mauvaises*

* The Emperor Leopold—so called on account of Sir R. M. K.'s residence at his Court.

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têtes, and fond and sanguine wishes of counter-revolutionists; and which we have innocently spread all over Europe. The Emperor himself was not undeceived with respect to the history of Monsieur Bouillé's rescue, till the 5th or 6th of this month. In short, never was delusion more complete. I shall be anxious to know how far the Emperor was *privy* to this measure. I have many reasons for thinking he must have been so; but I have too high an opinion of his wisdom and prudence to believe that he *approved*.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTER.

Sistova, June 9th, 1791.

ALL my laughing humour has left me, for this last month, my dear Anne, though I never was better in point of health, in my whole life. I have deferred writing to you in hopes of a more propitious turn in our affairs. It has not taken place; but I cannot relinquish all hope of it. I told you in my last, that we had got our political bark once more afloat, and were sailing with a fair wind for our destined harbour.

Yes, my dear friend; but the Austrian Cabinet thought proper, on a sudden, to bore two or three holes in her bottom, (for which, Lord forgive them!) and with all our pumps at work, we can hardly keep her from sinking. We have no less than six feet water in the hold at this moment; yet I (who am a pretty hardy sailor,) will strain every nerve to bring her safe into port.

Metaphor apart. The Austrians peremptorily demand what the Turks as peremptorily refuse. The latter have solemn treaties, and indisputable right on their side, and besides, are desirous to keep their own heads on their shoulders.

The Austrians are haughty, seem inflexible, and endeavour to intimidate the Ottomans. With that

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view, they declared to us on Tuesday, that they should set out from hence on Thursday, to make a *tour* to Bucharest; but without *dissolving* the Congress, and ready to return hither, at our first invitation.

The Turks promised to give an answer in *writing* to the Austrians in the Congress this morning, (Thursday) and to that meeting I am now going. At my return I shall add a few lines to this hasty letter, and in a few hours after I shall dispatch a messenger to England. Adieu, my dear sisters. I have had a *hard time of it* for these last seven months—and all for *this!* But I have done what mortal man *can* do (and all parties acknowledge it) to keep matters right; and if the Empress of Russia had not maintained a dangerous ascendancy at Vienna, which thwarted all our best purposes—we must infallibly have succeeded. God bless you.

June 9th. Afternoon.

The conference of this forenoon was peremptory on all sides, but not boisterous. The Austrians passed the Danube an hour ago, after taking a very polite (but not a formal leave) and promising to return. All this is black, very black! but I think my *pumps* begin to work a little more freely than they did, and there is half an inch less water in the hold. We mediators, and the Mussulmen (*men* they have shown themselves by their behaviour of this day) remain steady at Sistovo. Remember, my dear Anne, never to breed your sons *Plenipos!*

MR. EWART* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Berlin, June 18th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I received yours of the 4th current last night, and the inclosed copy of a dispatch to Lord Grenville

* His Majesty's Minister at Berlin; an acute and able diplomatist.

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which I have just written, will make you acquainted with the result of what has passed here, in consequence of the reception of the papers from Sistovo. You will be more fully informed of the particulars, by Monsieur Lucchesini, who is *expressly directed* to show you *everything*, with the most unbounded confidence, in return for your cordial co-operation, of which this Court is so highly sensible.

You will admit that there is no apology for the Emperor's conduct, the total change in which I know to be occasioned by his belief that England is rendered incapable of taking any active part in foreign affairs; that England will thereby be laid under an effectual restraint; and that he will be able to deceive his Prussian Majesty, and Colonel Bischoffswerder. You will see, however, by the instructions sent to the latter, that his Imperial Majesty deceives himself in regard to the last mentioned points; and, embarrassing as the situation of the ministry actually is in England, I trust the spirit of the nation would be roused to support its honour.

What a dreadful change has taken place! Our influence was all-powerful, so long as it was maintained with the necessary vigour; and the moment we flinched, all the Powers, as if by common consent, turned the tables upon us; and from having had the certainty of restoring peace in our power, there seems now to be the greatest wish of a general confusion. I have unfortunately proved too true a prophet, for I have assured our principals, for this twelvemonth, that this was the only alternative. I hope I shall have occasion to acquaint you fully, one day or other, of what passed when I was in England; and you will agree that it is impossible to suffer greater mortification than I do at this moment. I am, therefore, more disgusted with the profession than you can conceive. My only comfort

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is, that the resources of England and Prussia, being actually in a much better state than those of other powers, and the wretched state of Austria and Russia being well known—there is nothing to be feared should things come to extremities. As the idea of affecting a counter-revolution in France appears to be the great object the Emperor has in view at present, it is conceived here that however inconsistent this may be with his pretensions at Sistovo, yet should he be seriously inclined to embark in that business, it will not be in his power to insist on his unjust claims against the Porte.

The Empress of Russia and Potemkin are striving who can throw most ridicule on England, and our ministers, at Petersburgh. Their evident intention is to gain time, and to push their operations on the Black Sea. Oh! how my blood boils, my dear Sir! Jackson sends his best compliments, and I beg you will give mine to Lucchesini.

Most truly, yours,

JOSEPH EWART.

[*Most Secret.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. STRATTON.*

Sistovo, June 19th, 1791.

I WRITE you this very confidential letter, my dear Stratton, by Mr. Tarrant, brother-in-law to Marquis Lucchesini, who goes to Vienna as courier with many interesting matters of which the Marquis has under the *seal of secresy*, and for the good of the common cause, given me the most distinct details, which relate to the

* Sir R. M. K.'s Secretary of Legation, left as Chargé d' Affaires at Vienna. This *scrap* is given as a specimen of that slight and common cypher, in which numbers instead of representing *every word*, only stand for proper names.

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business in which *Fuimus** has been so long and fruitlessly engaged. 1. does not know to what degree 20 is informed, and Murrays-hall† shall always keep that to himself.

But it is necessary, and even expressly ordered by 30‡ that 15 should not, for the present, be let into any part of those secrets. I am therefore requested to give it to 21 upon his honour, to refrain from all participation to 15, or to any other person respecting the matters, themselves, or the mission of the bearer of this letter, who will probably, and perhaps *secretly*, join 25, § wherever he may be. Forgive me, my dear Stratton, if I wrap up all this in so much mystery (not having time for cypher); it was on this condition that the confidence to me was rendered so *complete*, and I pawned my word for your discretion. I have only one word to add, my dear friend, which is that upon my honour, I think the steps now taken by 30 towards 25 are the most proper in every respect that the actual situation of affairs could suggest.

Adieu, my trusty friend, this whole affair remains an absolute secret between you and your faithful

R. M. K.

[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 28th, 1791.

My dear Sir,

I write chiefly for the purpose of informing you that Shaw arrived here with your very important

* This epithet for the Earl of Elgin, is derived from his *motto*, the *royal* one of Bruce.

† Sir Robert Keith himself—so styled from his estate, according to Scottish custom.

‡ The King of Prussia. § The Emperor.

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dispatches on the 24th, and was forwarded to England by the first boat that could sail. His passage will have been slow, for we have strong westerly winds.

I need not inform you that the conduct of the Imperial plenipotentiaries, which surprises many, does not surprise me. You know that I did not expect anything that could come within the rules either of good faith or of good policy. I have long considered the hand of Providence as bearing in an especial manner upon the present established governments of Europe, so as to make them operate blindly and obstinately towards their own destruction, towards the general anarchy of mankind, and a vast scene of wild calamity and carnage.

Nothing less than a special Providence, for some unknown purpose, can explain the measures of the Vienna ministry. Having persuaded themselves that the Reichenbach Convention was disgraceful to their empire (in which, by the by, I totally differ from them, for I think it a *wise* treaty, if they had honourably and cheerfully executed it), they attempt to cover the supposed disgrace by allowing Monsieur Herbert to introduce and maintain subterfuges and chicanes which would have disgraced a Jesuit in his cell. So much for the principle. Next, as to the policy. For the sake of acquiring a miserable and imperceptible addition of useless possession, they now risk the involving themselves and all Europe in the calamities and embarrassments of a general war, at a moment when it was not only important but essential for the Emperor in every political, religious, moral, fraternal, and social point of view, to have placed himself on a most friendly understanding with Prussia and the maritime powers; and to have had his hands at liberty to act, where alone it is material to him in particular, to his honour, and the happiness of mankind in general, that they should act. We have a very expressive word in our language,

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"*infatuation*;" I do not recollect any synonymous word in others; but it is the only term that I can give to the conduct which I have just described. I lament it most sincerely; the effects will bear hard upon England, as well as upon other countries, but if the bitter cup is *forced* upon our lips, we must taste it.

Having spoken of the principle and policy, I must add a word as to the execution and detail. I do not mean to go through the long list of the Austrian minutes and declarations. I sincerely pity Baron Herbert, if he thought himself obliged to put his name to them, and I hope that, for his sake, they may never be published! But his last measure, of removing from the place of Congress, deserves a word of remark. If his demands had been as indisputable as they were the contrary, it did not belong to him, at least, to break up or separate the Congress which his master had demanded, and to which the mediation and guarantee of other Powers had been solemnly solicited and accepted. I will not pursue the subject farther; thank God, it does not belong to me to decide respecting it. In the meantime, my friendship for you, and my feelings as *your* countryman, have made me peruse with *pride and pleasure* the whole history of your becoming conduct in such embarrassing circumstances.

Ever, dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 1st, 1791.

MY LORD,

Two couriers and two estafettes have brought from Berlin within these eight-and-forty hours, very flattering letters to the Prussian minister here, to whose confidence (as well as to the letters with which Mr.

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Ewart has favoured me) I stand indebted for the complete and satisfactory information that the firm and dignified language held by his Prussian Majesty to the Court of Vienna, will, in all probability, soon produce the happy effect of restoring activity to this Congress; and on such a basis as to promise a safe and honourable termination of our labours. I need not assure your lordship how much the three mediating ministers have it at heart to contribute to the attainment of so salutary an object, by pursuing, with an unwearied, yet temperate zeal, every proper means of conciliation.

We have good reason for believing that the Court of Vienna (having at length adopted such principles as can alone lead to pacification) will, in a very little time, send orders to the Imperial plenipotentiaries at Bucharest to return to Sistovo.

In the meantime, it may be proper to acquaint your lordship, that since the abrupt and ill-judged secession of these ministers, we have had no other intercourse with them than by receiving and delivering to the Ottoman ministers their letters dated Bucharest, 13th June, both of which have remained *unanswered*. We may now rely on the *ministerial* assurances given to Baron Jacobi at Vienna, that the Austrian troops in Wallachia have positive orders to refrain from any species of hostility against the Turks; and as we have hitherto found the Grand Vizier well disposed to regulate *his* conduct on that head in conformity to the wishes we have earnestly and repeatedly expressed, we are in the persuasion that the advices sent from hence last night to his Highness will confirm his resolution to maintain (*de facto*) the suspension of arms for that *short* period of time which is necessary to render manifest those amicable purposes which Austria once more *professes* to entertain.

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We have found it a hard task, my lord, to keep matters thus in a state of tranquillity since the expiration of the armistice. But we trust that the first open and effectual step which it shall please the Court of Vienna to take to ensure the renewal of the Congress, will greatly alleviate the inquietude of that precarious situation in which we have lived for this month past.

[*Cypher.*]

Colonel Goetze* writes, that since the suspension of the Congress, suspicions, however ill-founded, of his Prussian Majesty having in a manner abandoned the Ottoman cause, have risen to such a pitch, that his own life and those of his Prussian companions have been in imminent danger. The Grand Vizier gave him notice, underhand, to withdraw for some little time from the head quarters. This he has done, and his efforts to induce the Vizier to treat with Russia, are necessarily suspended. We shall endeavour to keep the Vizier back from all enterprise against Austria till the King of Prussia shall have decided the great question; and in this *crisis* await anxiously further tidings from Vienna.

R. M. K.

[*By Lucchesini's Courier.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 6th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the painful state of inactivity and suspense in which we are held at Sistovo, and whilst the Grand Vizier adheres to the resolution of waiting the final decision of his Prussian Majesty before he undertakes

* The King of Prussia's agent at the Grand Vizier's camp.

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anything hostile against the Austrians, I can only join with my colleagues here in thinking it most *extraordinary* that the repeated professions and promises made by the Emperor at Milan, to Lord Elgin and Colonel Bischoffswerder, have hitherto produced not the smallest alteration here, or communication from the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Bucharest to us.

It would seem, my lord, that Prince Kaunitz either does not obey the orders he receives from his sovereign, or prefers the gratification of his own vanity to the interests of the State, by endeavouring to capitulate with the Prussian cabinet in such a manner as to avoid (if possible) the mortification of being obliged to send back the Austrian ministers to Sistovo, to *unsay* at once all that they had so peremptorily asserted, in consequence of his imperious and capricious mandate.

I can easily conceive, my lord, that this method of proceeding, and all the procrastination which arises from it, may equally suit with the pride of Prince Kaunitz, and with the interests of Russia, which he has so much at heart. But I cannot help regretting that he is so far indulged in it by the Court of Berlin, as to afford the Grand Vizier very serious cause of complaint, that he must lose the best months of the year for action, while he remains in uncertainty whether he is to look upon Austria as a neutral power, or as an enemy.

From the several private conferences which Monsieur Lucchesini has lately held with the Ottomans, he has found them extremely well-disposed to listen to the advice of their faithful ally, the King of Prussia, whose late generous assurances have filled them with gratitude. In short, my lord, I am convinced that everything may be obtained from them which the mediation shall advise, and which the Court of Vienna can demand with the smallest shadow of reason. But I must add, that all this ought to be carried into effect with the least

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delay *possible*, lest a sudden start of passion on the part of Mahmoud Pasha, whose character is violent, and his hatred to Austria *implacable*, should lead him to exert those ample powers—which have, of necessity, been intrusted to him by the Porte—of acting for *himself*, and with very little dependence on the will of the Vizier.

A small Austrian corps has been constantly posted at Califat, opposite to Widdin. This is a great *eye-sore* to Mahmoud, and the Turks here say they cannot be answerable for his not being tempted to chase the Austrians from thence, in spite of all the temperate advice conveyed to him by the Grand Vizier.

The first shot in Wallachia would (as Monsieur Spielman* has declared to Baron Jacobi) instantly *unite the Austrians and Russians*. I will not, though we have a right to suspect everything after all the double dealing we have experienced, harbour, even for a moment, the suspicion that it may be consistent with the views of Prince Kaunitz to rekindle war between the Porte and Austria, and thereby rivet the fetters which have so long bound the latter to Russia.

When (and I cannot doubt its shortly taking place) the Austrian ministers are sent back to Sistovo, our work may be finished in a few conferences. His Imperial Majesty has promised Lord Elgin to send the ratification here along with the treaty, and I trust that on this point, as on every other, the Imperial word will be held sacred.

I shall meet the Austrian plenipotentiaries with the true spirit of conciliation, and shall continue to act in the strictest concert with my Prussian colleague, whose reports to his Court of the hearty co-operation he has at all times experienced on my part, have procured me the honour of receiving, more than once, the thanks of

* One of the principal ministers of the Austrian Cabinet.

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his liberal-minded sovereign. I am likewise happy to furnish Mr. Ewart (in return for the very instructive letters with which he has favoured me) the most authentic and recent information respecting the state of the Prussian affairs at Constantinople. I gave your lordship in my last the substance of Sir Robert Ainslie's letters of the 14th, sent hither by his janissary; several parts of which, being *out of cypher*, could not be trusted to the Vienna post. I now send the letters themselves, with their duplicates, to go by messenger to England, or by the Berlin post, *no part of which passes through the Austrian territory*.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—Since writing the above, a courier has arrived from Berlin with a copy of a most *strange* proposition (inclosed) from Prince Reuss, regarding a demand on the part of Austria, for a deposit of fortresses, &c. In my humble opinion, Prince Kaunitz could not have possibly invented a shift in the negotiation more *directly repugnant* to the interests and settled principles of the Ottoman Porte than that of the aforesaid deposit. And in answer to the firm and becoming language held by the Prussian ministry in their reply, I do not suppose it possible for the Cabinet of Vienna to make even a *plausible* rejoinder.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO MR. EWART.*

Sistovo, July 6th, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

In return for your very interesting letters of the 18th and 19th June, I send you inclosed a whole budget of Turkish letters, and a long dispatch from myself to

* British minister at Berlin.

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the office. The length of the latter, and the hurry which attends the sudden departure of this messenger, prevent my entering into any other subject with you; but you may be assured that, however strong the epithets you are inclined to bestow on Austrian duplicity, they cannot go beyond my honest indignation. You may likewise rely on my full and cordial co-operation with my Prussian colleague in every object which so closely unites the interests of our two Courts. I beg you will express to the Prussian ministers my just sense of the honour done me by the thanks of their sovereign, conveyed to England; and likewise my steady determination to show myself worthy of their esteem.

You will forward the Turkish letters and my dispatch to England as you may think proper; but I beg that in any case they may be left under flying seal, and addressed to Lord Auckland for his perusal. Adieu, my dear Sir; you easily conceive that writing and copying all with *my own pen*, I must be brief, not to retard the departure of the messenger. For God's sake, help to get me soon out of this abominable place, and with honour and satisfaction to the allied Courts.

Yours very truly,

R. M. KEITH.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 8th, 1791.

MY LORD,

I had the honour to acquaint your lordship in my letter of the 6th (by a Prussian courier) that in consequence of assurances given at Milan, his Prussian Majesty had adopted the belief that the Austrian ministers must have returned some time ago to this place, and that considerable progress must have been made in our pacific negotiation. A few hours after

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Monsieur Lucchesini had sent back the courier with the necessary information that all remained here in *total suspense*, Monsieur Timoni, (the Austrian interpreter,) brought to the three mediating ministers assembled at my house the note *addressed to himself*, of which your lordship will find a copy inclosed.

It required no great sagacity to discover that Baron Herbert, being unwilling to descend from the very superior tone of his last letter of 18th June to the mediation, had thought proper to make an *approach* towards a renewal of correspondence by an indirect insinuation, under pretext of clearing up a trifling dispute in which a *freebooter* of Nicopolis was the principal personage.

We therefore told M. Timoni that so *weighty* a matter as the *ministerial* engagement on the part of Austria, that the armistice *de fait* should be *religiously observed*, and hope entertained by Baron Herbert *" de la prompte réprise et conclusion des affaires de la paix,"* ought not to have been signified to us under so unbecoming a form, and jumbled together with the paltry incident of a Turkish robbery!

M. Timoni, by many broken sentences, and meanings half expressed, gave us to understand that the Austrian plenipotentiaries had informed him in part of what had lately passed at Milan, and of the prospect of conciliation which had recently been opened to them. But that he believed, or supposed (for he never employed a direct affirmative) that these gentlemen were in expectation of receiving an *invitation* from the mediators to return to Sistovo.

To this I answered, by declaring, that as the Austrian ministers had, in their letter of the 13th June *to us*, expressly made it a *sine quâ non* of their return hither, that any invitation on our part should contain an acknowledgment of, and the Turkish acquiescence in, *every*

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demand made by their Court—they must be very ignorant, indeed, of the actual state of those affairs, to live in the least expectation of receiving an invitation of that nature, either from the Porte, or the ministers of the mediating Powers. That the *orders* to the Imperial plenipotentiaries would, of course, be sent *to them* from Vienna, and that we were much surprised at their not receiving them sooner.

Here this matter ended, and I should not have troubled your lordship with the detail of it, if it did not serve to prove how tardy is every move of the Cabinet of Vienna towards conciliation, and how awkwardly Baron Herbert sets about every step which may betray a necessity of descending from the summit of dictatorial supremacy, on which he had (as he thought) so immoveably taken his stand. We hope, however, that after all these habitual *littlenesses*, Baron Herbert will, in a few days, vouchsafe to announce to us his speedy return hither, in obedience to *positive orders* from his superiors.

I have put all these dealings in the single name of Baron H., because he alone holds the diplomatic pen, and that to his "*exclusive talents*" and "*consummate experience in affairs of State*," his Court has thought proper to entrust the sole management of this *knotty* and *crooked* negotiation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 16th, 1791.

My Lord,

What I foretold in my No. 76, respecting the acquiescence of the Turkish plenipotentiaries in the proposal of the mediators for a *short* renewal of the armistice, is completely verified, as your lordship will

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see by the inclosed note from Prince Morusi (principal dragoman to the Porte), containing in his own incorrect French, the translation from the Turkish of their resolution in regard to the foundation and form of this renewal. The Turks are very desirous to limit their armistice to a *fortnight;* but if the Austrian ministers, on their return hither, should make any strong objections to the shortness of the suspension, the Turks will consent to establish it for *three weeks,* but not longer.

In the meantime, it becomes necessary to acquaint your lordship with the correspondence now carried on, by letter, between Monsieur Lucchesini, and the Austrian ministers at Bucharest, the *satisfactory* conclusion of which is hourly expected.

Availing himself on the receipt, yesterday morning, of the *note verbale* containing his Prussian Majesty's *ultimatum* of the following phrase in it, relative to the recall of the Imperialists hither—"On *espère* que les Plénipotentiaires Impériaux (dont la déclaration catégorique du 13 Juin, de ne pouvoir conclure que sur le pied de leurs *premières propositions, a semblé exclure toute négociation ultérieure,* (feront part PRÉALABLEMENT aux ministres médiateurs, du changement survenu dans leurs ordres, et de leur disposition à reprendre les conférences"—my Prussian colleague determined to fulfil his master's instructions, by dispatching (in his own single name) the letter inclosed (No. 8) to the Austrian ministers, to obtain from them that *previous intimation* to the *three* mediators which his Court requires. I trust, my lord, that the Imperialists will comply with this necessary requisition, and that their answer (which I had hoped to join to this) will announce their return to Sistovo to-morrow, or next day.

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[*Private.*]

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, July 9th, 1791, A.M.

MY DEAR SIR,

I cannot make so much use of this occasion as I could have wished. The messenger arrived late last night, and another messenger with him, who is also charged with voluminous dispatches for Berlin, and inclosures for Petersburgh; and I am charged to make, and retain copies of the whole. In short, I, and the gentlemen of my bureau, have been kept up almost all night; and I have given my promise to the messengers that they shall quit my door before the clock strikes nine this morning.

I trust and hope that much of what is going now to you will be rendered useless by the rapid course of these eventful times, long before it arrives. The Emperor and Prince Kaunitz have at last arrived at the happy circumstance of talking both the same language. I infer from it that his Majesty's *loyauté* will at last take place of his minister's impracticability and chicane; that peace will take place at Sistovo; and also that the negotiation will end happily at Petersburgh. In short we are getting, not uncreditably, out of the scrape into which we had entangled ourselves, for the benefit of others. But all this is all old history! There is one good purpose in this messenger's dispatches. He carries you leave to return to your post at Vienna! I have long and ardently wished, and have repeatedly written so to Lord Grenville, to have you released out of that dark, and helpless, and barbarous *séjour* of Sistovo. I hope that you are very *highly paid* for being there; it merits at least that consolation! I shall soon expect to hear that Baron Herbert has stepped off his stilts into the puddle of diplomatic dirt which he has prepared for himself.

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As to the Emperor's future system and conduct, you will be best able to judge, and decide on your return to Vienna. If he sees his interest, I think he will follow it; but his views have hitherto been distracted amidst the unsettled multiplicity of objects and pursuits. It certainly is his first interest, as it is the interest of all of us, to have peace at any rate; and to keep his dominions from catching the pestiferous disease of French innovations. If this can be done for a short period, there will be no further danger; for France is running rapidly to a farther crisis of anarchy and of extreme calamity: and will soon cease to be an object of imitation to the zealots of any nation. She will also soon present some curious questions for the friendly concert of the sovereigns of other kingdoms. In short, it is clearly the Emperor's interest to be cordially well with us; and I hope and trust that he will feel, and see it to be so. Can you decypher this scrawl? I am ashamed to send it in such a shape.

Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

P.S.—It will be a satisfaction to you to see that our new principal* is cordially and fully sensible of the merits and importance of your conduct in all the trying business of your negotiation.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 19th, 1791.

IT is with infinite pleasure, my lord, that I now see the pacific negotiation in which I have the honour to bear a part, in so fair a way of being brought, without further delay, to that happy issue which is so conformable to the wishes of our benevolent sovereign.

It is matter of great satisfaction to me to have it in

* Lord Grenville.

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my power to say, that the Austrian ministers returned here from Bucharest last night. They paid a visit this morning to each of the mediating ministers, and the declaration they made to me, singly, respecting the spirit of the instructions which occasioned their return hither, was to the following effect:—

That they are ready to sign a convention for the renewal of the armistice, for a short space of time.

That they are authorised to proceed to the signature of the definitive treaty of peace, on the sole basis of the *status quo de fait*, et NON PAS DE DROIT.

That such points as cannot be settled between Austria and the Porte by immediate negotiation, shall be hereafter regulated by a separate convention.

That they have orders to show to the mediating ministers in general, a just and well merited confidence; but that they are particularly enjoined to testify to the Prussian minister, the firm reliance which the Emperor places in the friendship of the King of Prussia, with whom his political connection becomes every day more and more intimate.

Such, my lord, is the fair prospect now before us. The sudden departure of the Prussian messenger obliges me to confine myself to this brief statement of facts.

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 22nd, 1791.

My Lord,

I mentioned to your lordship in my preceding letter, the visit paid to me by the Austrian ministers on the morning after their return from Bucharest, and the declaration they then made to me.

I was soon after acquainted by Monsieur Lucchesini, that in a previous and long visit, these ministers had

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informed him that their Court, at the same time that they wished to bring the definitive treaty to a speedy conclusion, under the mediation of the three allied powers, and on the single principle of the strict *status quo*, had particularly charged them to address themselves to *him*, (the Prussian minister) singly; in order to effectuate through the singular weight which, as the minister of an ally, he had acquired with the Turks, an amicable agreement on all the points in contestation, which were hereafter to be regulated by a *separate convention* between the two contracting parties. They gave him also to understand that though the Emperor did not mean to *confound* in any shape, the treaty of peace, and the aforesaid convention, yet he had it much at heart to make them *simultaneous* acts.

Monsieur Lucchesini (after explaining that an apparently wilful, and obstinately persevered in misapprehension of the Austrian ministers, as to the delay which might arise from reference to the three mediating powers, had the King of Prussia's other suggestion of *arbitration* by them been adhered to, had given rise to the present substitution,) ended by saying that he had therefore agreed to employ his single good offices for the arrangement of the separate convention; but with the entire knowledge of his colleagues in the mission.

I told the Prussian minister that the object of my mission there being the conclusion of the definitive treaty of peace on the sole principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, that great point being secured, and put in the way of a speedy and *certain* termination, I should be little in pain through what channel a *separate* and *subsequent* convention, in which the mediation was to take no share, could be brought to bear: that the only *proviso* on which I must insist was, that no article in it should be in the smallest degree repugnant to the instructions which Baron de Haeften and myself had received from

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our Courts relative to such *immaterial* concessions as the Porte should, not only *willingly*, but even without a *shadow* of menace or constraint, judge proper to grant to Austria, to prevent the delays which might result from any other mode of proceeding, and in order to consolidate the peace, by rooting out all seeds of dissension, for the time coming: that I expected, and required an immediate communication of every proposal made by Austria, and of every Turkish answer; that I might have it in my power to oppose (if necessary) whatever clause might appear to me to be in any degree inconsistent with my instructions. To this Marquis Lucchesini readily consented, and your lordship will see, in the inclosed papers, that he has acted up to that agreement.

On the evening of Tuesday the three mediators went together to Count Esterhazy's house, where we met Baron Herbert by appointment. I then made a proposal in form to those ministers, and in the most pressing terms, to proceed without a *moment's* delay, to the renewal of the convention of armistice for the term of *three weeks*. The Austrians insisted long for a prolongation of a *month*; they, however, at length consented to the shortest of these terms. But, my lord, to our great surprise they declared, and remained inflexible in maintaining, that they had no authority to bind their Court to terminate the negotiation in the space of three weeks. After two hours of fruitless debate, we were forced to leave them, without having carried that point which his Prussian Majesty looks upon as *indispensable*. The next morning they waited on the Prussian minister, and seemed little disposed to give us satisfaction on any of the points under immediate discussion.

I proposed to my colleagues in the mediation, that we should jointly deliver on the succeeding day a very

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pressing invitation *in writing*, to resume without the smallest delay the work of pacification, and to carry it *immediately* to that happy conclusion which was evidently within our reach, by the declared concurrence of all parties, in *one and the same principle*. My colleagues joined with me in thinking this a *duty incumbent* on us, and they desired me to draw up such an invitation in the most urgent terms. I accordingly committed to paper what your lordship will find inclosed (marked B), which was approved of and delivered accordingly.

On the morning of Thursday, Monsieur Lucchesini found the Austrian ministers rather more tractable than heretofore. They put into his hands, and begged of him to present to the three mediators, the minutes of the definitive treaty (such as Prince Kaunitz had *now* sent it to them), and which they hoped would be liable to no objection, as the 4th, 5th, and 6th Articles (containing all the Austrian claims and demands) are *entirely omitted*. I do not trouble your lordship with a new copy, as with this *subtraction* it is *verbatim* the same with that discussed in Congress in the middle of May!

I have the honour, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, July 27th, 1791.

My Lord,

In the afternoon of the 25th instant the messenger Wiffin delivered to me your lordship's dispatches Nos. 5 and 6.

The very gracious manner in which his Majesty has been pleased to signify his approbation of my zealous services, is to me the best of all rewards; and would

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prove the most powerful of all incentives to redouble those efforts, if one grain of additional energy or efficacy could be found within the reach of my poor abilities, beyond what I have constantly exerted. I am thoroughly sensible of, and grateful for, that goodness which dictated to your lordship the flattering expressions of esteem and confidence which accompany the notification of the new commission which his Majesty intends to put into my hands as soon as the affairs of this Congress shall be terminated.

The instructions your lordship has sent me with regard to *both* are clear and satisfactory in the highest degree, and they shall be fulfilled with prudential caution, and undeviating punctuality.

But happily for the King's beneficent views, and for your lordship's patriotic wishes, a great part of the instructions contained in No. 5, is now inapplicable to the state of affairs at Sistovo, since the fortunate turn they have taken, in consequence of the spirited language held by the Allied Powers, at London, Berlin, Vienna, and Milan. We have now, my lord, the best grounds to believe that in the course of eight or ten days, the definitive treaty of peace will be signed here on the original principle of the *status quo ante bellum*, and there is every reason to hope that the repeated explanations which have taken place between the sovereigns of Austria, England, and Prussia, will not only have served to consummate that work, and all its *appendages*, but to establish a real and solid foundation of reciprocal esteem and confidence between those three great monarchs, whose intimate connection will become the best security of the future tranquillity of Europe.

I am glad to repeat it, my lord, that there is no cause to apprehend that affairs here should fall once more into that perplexity and danger which would call upon me to fulfil your lordship's eventual instructions, with that

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force which they ought to carry along with them. But if (contrary to all appearances) such a risk of disunion should again be brought into view, your lordship's directions for my guidance are *explicit*, and shall, in such case, be zealously executed.

There is but one point of the King's commands, that of my speedy return to Vienna, which it does not depend on me to follow out with that expedition which corresponds with my own hearty wishes. It appears to me, my lord, that indispensable duty ties me down to this spot, till it shall be determined whether or not the exigence of affairs requires any arbitration on the part of the mediating ministers, in order to put the finishing hand likewise to the separate convention.

Your lordship may be assured that whenever I can safely say to my superiors, and in my own conscience, that my commission here has acquired that full completion which his Majesty has a right to expect from a faithful servant, I shall hasten to get out of this miserable Bulgarian cage, and return to Vienna with as much expedition as desolated countries, burning huts, and the obstacles created by armies *in march*, will permit. To be the bearer of the *olive branch* with honour to my sovereign, will gladden, as well as quicken, every step of my journey.

(Signed) R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistova, August 4th, 1791.

My Lord,

Nothing can exceed the pleasure with which I acquit myself of a most agreeable duty, in giving your lordship (not a detail of the numberless formalities observed in this day's assembly, but the *certain* information that the signature of the definitive treaty of

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peace between Austria and the Porte, took place *this day in full Congress*, and that no one diplomatical sanction which can authenticate and legalise that solemn act, on the part of each of the contracting powers, has been omitted.

It was with great satisfaction that the mediating ministers were witnesses of the unaffected joy which the representatives of both of the principal parties showed at the restoration of concord between the two empires. The inclosed copies (in each of the languages) will furnish the most convincing proofs that the treaty is drawn up with the strictest adherence to the principles on which his Majesty's guarantee, and the full powers he had the goodness to intrust to me, were founded.

My positive duty ended with the signature, and I should have set out for Vienna, within the three or four days necessary for collecting the requisite post-horses at every stage, but, at the *earnest request of all parties*, particularly the *Turks* (who imagine that the security of the peace depends in some measure on my acquiescence), I have consented to assist in person at the exchange of *ratifications*, which ceremony will take place on the 15th inst. I the more readily comply, as with all the diligence I could employ through such exhausted countries, and amid the march of armies, I could not reach Vienna before the Emperor's departure from that capital.

It now only remains for me to assure your lordship that, as it has ever been the height of my ambition to prove myself an active and useful servant in executing the King's commands, if I have been so fortunate as to succeed on this occasion in obtaining his gracious approbation, I shall feel myself one of the happiest of his Majesty's happy subjects.

(Signed) R. M. K.

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[*By the same messenger as the foregoing*].

MY LORD, *Sistovo, August 4th*, 1791.

Within a short space of time after the signature of the definitive treaty, the Austrian and Ottoman plenipotentiaries put the finishing hand to *their* separate convention; by which every pretension on the part of the Court of Vienna is obliterated, and every source of contest between the two contracting parties, is *effectually* and *definitively* precluded.

This act is entirely distinct from the definitive treaty, and *posterior* to it. It is concluded, without either formal *mediation* or *arbitration*, as an amicable arrangement between two Powers, *already at peace* with each other.

I flatter myself that on the perusal of the inclosed correct copy of the said convention, your lordship will find that the vigilant care with which my duty taught me to watch over its progress, and conclusion, has not proved unsuccessful, and that every article of it corresponds perfectly with his Majesty's constant desire to maintain the *equilibre* between the two empires, as much as possible, and without any claim to an equivalent, at the expense of Austria, being urged by the Prussian monarch.

Such, my lord, has been the welcome termination of the last branch of the business for which this Congress was assembled, and I sincerely hope that our gracious sovereign will judge it to be every way satisfactory.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—I am happy to add that the Austrians have laid aside the thoughts of delivering a declaration (respecting the repair of fortresses) which, while it would have made not the least alteration in the reciprocal

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obligations of the parties, would have manifested a lingering feeling of *ill humour* at the Turkish refusal of a stipulation on the subject.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistova, August 4th, 1791.

HUZZAH! my dear sisters! after drifting through storms, quicksands, and all manner of perils, for almost eight or nine mortal months, our political bark is safe in the desired harbour; safe in the *heart* of the harbour, with all colours flying, and not a flaw in her bottom!

To quit my metaphor, my dear Anne, learn and rejoice, that the definitive treaty of peace between Austria and the Porte was *signed and sealed* this day, on the precise terms which correspond with the King's benevolent wishes, and fulfil *every one* of those which the Administration made known to me.

In order to render the benefits of this peace as durable as possible, we have brought another very important point to bear, in rooting out *all seeds* of dissension between the two empires. A *separate convention* (entirely distinct from the treaty of peace) has been signed this evening, between Austria and the Porte, as an amicable agreement between two powers *already in peace;* and in virtue of some small and voluntary concessions made by the Turks, the limits and extensive frontiers of both empires are properly and irrevocably settled.

Thus, my dear Anne, this very difficult job of work is completely and handsomely finished; and without leaving either sting or tail behind it. I am happy to have proved myself an active workman in rearing one more monument (and a lasting one) to the good faith and national energy of Old England. If my King and country are pleased (and they will be so), I shall think myself amply rewarded. As to personal advantages, or

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decoration, they are little in my thoughts; but if they come, they shall be thankfully received. I have the strongest proofs already, of the esteem and confidence of the King's confidential servants—these are at once my pride and comfort.

I and my faithful Stuart (to whose affection and assiduity I am much obliged), burn with impatience for our release from this narrow cage, but we must wait for the exchange of ratifications, which will be in less than a fortnight. Then for Vienna! with light hearts, and some remnant of Turkish piastres. You shall hear again. To-day I am in all the bustle of couriers and circular letters. Adieu, my dear friend, you share my satisfaction.

P.S.—I saw with real pleasure to-day that all the Turkish *apathy* and affected gravity gave way, at the moment when the cannon were fired on the signature of the peace—to real feeling, and joy at the event. The Ottoman plenipos embraced each other like blind beggars; and would have embraced *us*, had not the *melting mood* of their *dripping beards* forbidden that courtesy. I got a *monstrous* heavy sable pelisse put on my shoulders, at the moment I was fainting with heat. But *honour*, my dear Anne, is everything! Heaven guard you, and send us a happy meeting!

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 9th, 1791.

My Lord,

During the short interval of a few days which must yet elapse before the instruments of ratification can be received from Vienna and Constantinople, I find an agreeable occupation in listening to the public and unfeigned professions of perfect satisfaction which the ministers of the *Christian*, as well as of the Mahometan

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monarch, vie with one another in expressing, at the happy termination of every branch of the business which occasioned our meeting here. Your lordship will easily believe that the mediating ministers think themselves peculiarly fortunate in having been able thus to reconcile the wishes of all parties.

Should our success in that difficult task hereafter be honoured with the approbation of our respective sovereigns, the Congress of Sistovo will perhaps be quoted in history as a singular instance of a long and *litigious* political assembly, at the conclusion of which, all parties were equally pleased. I am prepared to set out for Vienna on the *very day* of the exchange of ratifications.

No answer has been received by the Ottoman ministers from the Grand Vizier to their letters, announcing the signature of the definitive treaty. That answer is looked for daily, and with *impatience;* an officer of the Turkish Chancery, who was dispatched at the moment of signature, would reach the capital on Sunday last, and his return is expected on Thursday or Friday at farthest.

(Signed) R. M. K.

The delays and procrastinations of the "unchristian Congress" were destined to attend it to the *last*. Ottoman slowness, as it first suspended, now protracted its final conclusion; and (unhappily for the object of Turkish gratitude and predilection) a prolonged residence of a few autumnal days in Bulgaria, brought on illness, by which the unbroken constitution of Sir R. M. Keith received its first, and it is feared permanent injury.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 12th.

My Lord,

The Tartar couriers expected this day by the Ottoman plenipotentiaries from the Porte and from the army are not yet arrived; and I am sorry to acquaint your lordship that the delay of the Grand Vizier's answer does not surprise our Turkish colleagues, as they *hint* (with a mixture of concern and diffidence) that they have for a long time past been obliged to habituate themselves to the *slowness of all his measures*. The Vizier has many enemies in the Seraglio, and should the opinion (pretty openly expressed by the Turkish officers here) gain ground, that the confidence of the Sultan his master in his active talents has been misplaced, it may cost him his head, before his present campaign is at an end.

According to the best calculations we can make, both the instruments of ratification will be here on the 16th, and might be exchanged on the following day. But, my lord, as that will fall on a Wednesday (a most inauspicious day) we must not be surprised if the Turks, who have found that *every happy hour* of this Congress took place on a *Thursday*, should make it a serious point with the mediators to gratify their ardent wish, by putting the finishing hand to the whole negotiation on the morning of Thursday the 18th instant.

I shall have all my servants and carriages on the other side of the Danube on the preceding evening, and shall set out from hence an hour after the last ceremony shall be complete. I intend to make no stop on the road, and hope to reach Vienna in twelve or thirteen days. But should I meet on the road a messenger from your lordship, I shall travel, if necessary, night and day to fulfil his Majesty's commands.

R. M. K.

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SIR ROBERT AINSLIE* TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Constantinople, August 9th, 1791.

DEAR SIR,

Only two hours since I was honoured with your most welcome letters of the 1st and 4th instant, and although in the paroxysm of a tertian fever, I cannot consent to slip this first opportunity of a Tartar, who is to depart immediately from the Porte for Sistovo, to offer you my hearty, and truly sincere congratulations upon the happy issue of the salutary work of peace in which you, my dear Sir, have held such a distinguished place.

It affords me the highest satisfaction to be able to assure you that the Reis Effendi, the Lord Chief Justice of Roumelia, and other eminent persons to whom I sent compliments upon this important occasion, did all, in the strongest terms, express their personal gratitude for this, amongst other signal services so nobly rendered to their Court by Great Britain and Prussia; and the highest encomiums upon the dignified, able, and zealous conduct which you, my dear Sir, and your co-operating colleagues, have exhibited throughout the whole of your arduous and delicate negotiations.

It is very remarkable that no advices were received from Sistovo since the 24th ultimo, and that in the interval, the Sultan, in a manner besieged by a certain party, was daily, nay, hourly deceived by false and unfavourable reports. I refer you to my annexed letter to Lord Grenville, which I beg you will seal and forward; and wishing you a continuation of health, the greatest of blessings, I have the honour to be, with most sincere attachment, dear Sir, Your, &c.,

ROBERT AINSLIE.

* British Minister at Constantinople.

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SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Sistovo, August 19th, 1791.

My Lord,

In consequence of most unaccountable dilatoriness on the part of both the Imperial Courts, we are here on the 19th *at noon* without the ratifications of *either party!* There can be no doubt of their arriving before evening, and the exchange will take place to-morrow morning, after which I shall cross the Danube, and proceed some stages on my way to Vienna. The state of my own health (which has been a good deal shaken during the last *seven days*) would have exposed me to the risk of being laid up in some miserable hut in Wallachia if I had begun my journey sooner. But a pretty violent paroxysm of an ague brought on a salutary crisis yesterday, and Prince Esterhazy's physician assures me that I may safely set out to-morrow. I need not say how gladly I shall quit this *burning cage*, in which I have been confined for *eight* long months.

I am glad to be able to render my letters in some degree interesting, by the tidings brought to General Mitrowski at Bucharest, and forwarded by him hither with *all speed*, of the preliminaries of peace between Russia and the Porte being signed by Prince Repnin and the Grand Vizier on the 10th instant.

We are happy here in the supposition that our pacification has *essentially* contributed to accelerate the other. We have made our visits of *congé* to the Ottoman plenipotentiaries, and they have returned theirs. They have requested of the mediators to convey to their sovereigns the strongest assurance of the sincere gratitude of the Porte for the signal services for which the Turkish empire stands indebted to the magnanimity and friendly assistance of the three allied Courts.

A second paroxysm of the ague warns me to finish

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this letter, and make up the packet for the messenger, lest a *third fit* should incapacitate me at the moment of his setting out.

I have the honour to be, &c.

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Sistova, August 19*th*, 1791.

My dear Sisters,

Joy upon joy! and a miraculous increase! *Our* pacification has produced, and only *seven days* after its own birth (not its *equal*, for I pretend it can have no equal), but another hopeful babe, which will give satisfaction to all Europe. On the 10th instant Prince Repnin and the Grand Vizier signed the preliminaries of peace between *those two empires*, with an immediate cessation of all hostilities. So, my dear Anne, *all Europe is at peace;* and those who may, with a safe conscience, claim the merit of having essentially contributed to the restoration of that general blessing, have deserved well of humanity. There is not a grain of vanity, my dear friend, in this assertion; it proceeds from honest and liberal feeling.

I have been sadly fatigued these four or five days, and the heats have been almost intolerable. But all goes well when a man is making the last preparations to get out of a narrow cage in the hottest of all dog-days. I have just now had the parting visit of the three Ottoman plenipotentiaries, who show themselves more unaffectedly grateful than ever Turks did to Christians. What makes them the happiest of men is, that the Grand Signor has, in return for the copy of our peace, sent them his *benediction*—a term which his Sublimity never employs but to express unlimited approbation. We got these visits of ceremony over on both sides, in

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order that I might be ready to set out the instant after the instruments of ratification shall have been exchanged through the hands of the mediators. This we hope to do *to-morrow,* and then, my dear sisters, for Vienna! where my superiors are desirous to employ my zeal for other good purposes.

I am sorry that the necessary attention to my health must make me travel (at least for the first days) by short stages. But I am determined not to play the fool by inflaming my blood in acquiring reputation as a *courier*. I shall be at Vienna by the 1st or 2nd of September, and in full time enough, as the Emperor's coronation at Prague is to be the 6th, and he will not return to his capital till the 11th or 12th.

So much for peaces and princes; now for a little domestic chat. I am sure my good friends at home are delighted with the success of my last great ramble. It will make me contented in my mind, and help to make me easy in circumstances to the end of my life. I know not what present the Turks intend to make us at the ratification, but they have treated us very handsomely throughout, and I should be ashamed to have put them to so great an expense, if the services we have rendered to their empire were not, in fact, the most important they have owed to mediators since they existed in Europe.

I have been at a very great expense, and know not yet what allowance is made me from home; and I am now setting out, with five heavy-loaded carriages, to make a second journey of eight hundred miles to return to Vienna. But I have no doubt of meeting with every sort of remuneration, as my superiors are more than pleased with my services. I have very good accounts from all my friends on the Continent, and expect still better from your island in a day or two.

My trusty comrade Stuart is well, and jumping for

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joy to get once more into Christendom. To say the truth, a man must have a very serious object of pursuit to bear up against all the inconveniences and deprivations of this barbarous village; and our Bulgarian climate, of which I have so often boasted, has, since the beginning of these insupportable heats, begun to shake the constitutions of several of my people. But they are all getting well, and the exercise of *moderate* travelling is the best of all medicines.

August 19*th*.

The ratifications of neither party are at this moment arrived, my dear sisters, but they must be here to-day, and be exchanged to-morrow *early*; therefore I must make up this letter immediately, as I may be called upon unawares; for the Austrian interpreter (who sets out for Vienna the *instant* after the exchange) will be the bearer of it. Adieu, then, my dear sisters; be in no uneasiness about my journey; we have had rain, and the weather is now cool. Heaven bless you, and grant us a happy meeting!

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Orajova, at least twenty miles from Sistova,
August 25*th*, 1791.

Now *His Name be praised!* in full chorus; for after exchanging the ratifications of the best peace which has been made these fifty years, and thereby laying in store of comfortable *reflections* for life, I set out, my dear sisters, on the 23rd in the evening, and made two stages to be once fairly on my way to a comfortable *home*. Yesterday I had my fourth attack of an honest regular ague, of which I am no more afraid than of a Miss's anger with her fan. For what the deuce has an ague to do in my carcase, or with what *can* it fight;

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as in the last *fourteen days* not one grain of animal food has entered into my mouth. This is a sort of regimen which sets *Madame la fièvre* at defiance, and I will so *starve* the lady on the one hand, and so *bump* her on the other, that before I reach Vienna, she and I will be an hundred leagues asunder.

The Grand Turk behaved with great munificence towards each of the three mediating ministers, by giving to each of us at parting an order for *thirty thousand piastres*,* on his treasury, besides clothing us again in handsome sable pelisses (the last of which is really of value) and mounting us on an Asiatic horse, with a prodigious fine caparison. What with the Imperial present, and the remains of the *Tain*, (or money allotted for daily subsistence) a good round sum has been remitted by me to Constantinople; but there the Turkish coin, since its late debasement, is a drug which we shall find it hard to get off our hands, even at 25 per cent. discount, against any European place of exchange. No matter, my dear Anne, I have *money enough*. I did not go to Turkey with one avaricious idea about me; I certainly bring back none. But I carry along with me the greatest of all satisfactions, the certainty of having acted my part like a gentleman, and an upright servant of the Crown; and to have helped essentially in the general pacification of Europe; as the Russian peace is the genuine daughter (though I am afraid she will not prove the handsome daughter) of the peace of Sistovo. But enough of this; I hate boasting.

Stuart has not ailed one quarter of an hour; he is

* Whether from a higher estimate of the value of the present pacification, or depreciation in the value of money, or increased liberality on the part of the Porte: 25,000 were similarly presented at the Congress of Forzany, on conclusion of a treaty between Turkey and Russia, twenty years before, in 1772.

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an affectionate lad, and has been of great service to me. Pray if any of his friends be within your reach, let them know how much I value him. I rest here this half-day, to write to everybody; and to-morrow, *Madame la fièvre* being to make me (I hope) her last visit, I shall make two stages before the hour when she is used to come. I will receive her in a Wallachian hut, underground, (there being no other at Gogos); this will so disgust her, that I shall hear no more of her. The next day I arrive in good time at Czernetz, and Trajan's bridge; which last I will this time examine with my own eyes. The next day, Meadia, then Lugos, then Temeswaer, and from thence into Hungary, amongst civilized people. I shall make my way to Vienna with every maxim of prudence, except the Latin adage, "*festina lentè*," which I take to be illustrious nonsense; and made for no man who has public and important occupation awaiting him.

I hope to be at Vienna on the 5th or 6th of September, and consequently in full time to pay my court to the Emperor, on his return from Prague, where he is to be crowned on the 6th, and the Empress on the 8th of September. There is a pretty circumstance attending the latter coronation, which is, that this Emperor's eldest daughter (whose state of health did not allow her to think of matrimony) being appointed Abbess of the Noble Chapter at Prague, has thereby the right, which she will certainly exercise, of putting the crown on the head of her affectionate mother. That part of the ceremony is the only one I regret not to see. Basta! Don't you think, my dear sisters, that for a man who is *said* to be labouring under a heavy ailment, I have written a great deal?

So I have, my dear friends; and I will overdo in nothing. Love to all cronies; I have not time to enumerate them. Tell them all my affections grow

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stronger as I grow older: they will not believe you, but the thing is true! Be in no shape in pain about my journey. It is the best medicine for me. The weather is not inconveniently hot, and the roads are excellent. Adieu. God bless you, and all the spinstership.

You shall hear again from Buda.

R. M. K.

P.S.—Don't forget the message about Stuart.*

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, September 7th, 1791.

MY DEAR ANNE,

What you say is perfectly true; *six* words of sterling weight are worth a million. Look at *this date*, and rejoice! I arrived here in the morning of the 5th, a good deal fatigued, but with my health so much improved by the journey, that in a week or ten days, I shall be the rose in June, and the trout in the clear stream. I am honestly WELL and HAPPY beyond measure, because all my business has succeeded to my most sanguine wishes. I found all my friends here well. I expect a messenger every hour from England, with many pleasant and comfortable tidings for your brother. The *double* fruits of his labours are well

* Afterwards the well-known, and highly-distinguished Peninsula hero, Sir Wm. Stuart. Those familiar with the exploits of one, whose military ardour it would have been sacrilege to stifle under the harassing bondage of what his older soldier friend styles "tugging like the veriest slave, at the diplomatic oar," will appreciate the disinterested candour with which Sir R. M. Keith (at the risk of considerable disappointment to his gallant pupil's father) rescued him from an uncongenial slavery, and gave to the army of Britain one of its noblest ornaments. "I am persuaded" (writes he to Lord Galloway), "that you will *do well* to let your son follow the vocation, in which he has *every right* to expect promotion and honour. I will *be bound for his becoming an excellent officer.*"

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known and approved at Whitehall,* and ere long you will, I doubt not, hear of something to his advantage.

I promised you *six words*. I have given you *ten*. My blessing into the bargain, and love to all.

N.B.—No more journies into Turkey!

Yours ever, my dear sisters,
With heart and good-will,
R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Sept. 7th, 1791.

My Lord,

After a journey more agreeable and expeditious than I had reason to expect, through the most inhospitable countries, and with a *tertian ague* for my companion, I arrived at Vienna on the morning of the 5th, and as my health has gained considerably by travelling, I am now in a situation to obey, with activity as well as alacrity, whatever commands his Majesty shall be pleased to honour me with.

Mr. Stratton (with whose assiduous endeavours to forward the King's service I trust that your lordship has every reason to be satisfied), has given up the pen to me, and I beg leave to return (for a moment) to Sistovo to mention the occurrences of the forenoon which preceded my departure.

* No idle boast. A letter of the *same date* from Mr. Dundas, (then high in office, and Mr. Pitt's most trusted colleague) thus says in writing to the "sister Anne" of the foregoing correspondence: "Lord Grenville is an exceeding good man, and your brother cannot be in better, or more honourable hands. This has been a busy summer for Sir Robert; and I daresay has given him a new stock of health and spirits. Nothing so good for both, as to be *put upon one's mettle!* He has been so; and it will give you much satisfaction to be informed by me, *not in ministerial style*, that he has done *incomparably well*; and in the conduct of an arduous and delicate negotiation, has managed himself so as to obtain our complete approbation."

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Previous to the exchange of the ratifications of the two Imperial Courts, Prince Morusi, chief dragoman of the Porte, waited on each of the three mediating ministers apart; and in the name of the Sultan, he expressed to us the high sense that monarch entertained of the impartiality and perseverance which had been constantly displayed in the conduct of the mediators, and likewise the obligation he owed to their sovereigns for the equitable and solid peace, which was that day to receive its final sanction.

Prince Morusi then presented to each of us an order on the Imperial treasury, at Constantinople, for the sum of thirty thousand piastres, for the expense of our journey homewards. That sum, according to the actual value of the debased Turkish coin may be equivalent to about two thousand three hundred pounds sterling.

As soon as the instruments of ratification were exchanged in the Congress chamber, each of the five Christian ministers was invested with a handsome sable pelisse, as a distinguished mark of the Sultan's satisfaction. I found in the court of the Congress house, a Turkish horse, very richly caparisoned, which was likewise a gift from the Grand Signor, and in return I distributed handsome presents of gold watches and money (according to what is practised at the Porte on similar occasions) to each of the persons who had been employed in presenting to us those marks of the Grand Signor's munificence. I mention these circumstances only to evince the sincerity of the gratitude towards his Majesty which the Ottoman plenipotentiaries had been commanded to express, and to render manifest, by the distinctions heaped on the King's minister.

Promotions to high dignity have taken place among our *quondam* Turkish colleagues, and all three of them are ordered to Galatz to negotiate the Russian peace. Nothing could have added so much to the heartfelt joy

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of the Prussian minister and my own at the happy termination of our negotiation, as our conviction that the pressing and repeated representations we had made by order of our Courts, to the Porte, and the exhortations we had employed with the Grand Vizier to overcome his repugnance to treat, on the terms proposed, had proved so fortunate, as to pave the way for the immediate conclusive signature of the preliminaries with Russia.

I am now to thank your lordship for the very explicit instructions contained in your dispatch No. 7, which came to my hands at the eve of my departure from Sistovo, and it gave me infinite satisfaction to find that under the guidance of your lordship's preceding commands, I had held a conduct in every point, respecting the acceleration of the ultimate conclusion of the whole business, and my own personal stay at the place of Congress, perfectly consonant to those orders which your lordship conveyed to me in the above-mentioned dispatch.

On the evening of my arrival at Buda, the messenger Basilico joined me there, and delivered to me your dispatch No. 8, in which the most welcome assurance which your lordship had the goodness to give me, of his Majesty's most gracious and full approbation of my services, filled my mind with true satisfaction and gratitude. In the view to hasten the arrival of Basilico at Constantinople, I dispatched him by the way of Belgrade, and gave him a letter to Marshal Wallis requesting his Excellency to forward Basilico, with a special janissary to accompany him. I wrote by him to Sir Robert Ainslie, in the precise spirit of your lordship's instructions; and I am persuaded that I may pawn my credit for that ambassador's exerting the most strenuous efforts to carry his Majesty's commands respecting the Russian peace into execution.

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On my arrival here I made a round of the visits prescribed by etiquette at this Court. Most of the Imperial ministers are at Prague, but Prince Kaunitz being at his villa in the suburbs of the city, I waited on him there last night, and was received in a very polite manner. The only mention, however, which he made of our late negotiation was in these words, "*Je suis fâché mon cher Chevalier de toutes les peines que nous vous avons occasionnées là bas; et nous vous sommes très obligés des soins que vous avez donnés pour écarter les difficultés, et amener une conclusion heureuse.*" I assured him of the pleasure I had felt in contributing by the most impartial good offices, to so happy an event.

R. M. K.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, September 6th, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

All your dispatches from Sistovo, to No. 94, inclusive, have been regularly received, and faithfully and expeditiously forwarded. As this will find you returned to Vienna, and Mr. Stratton's functions consequently suspended, allow me through you, to make my cordial acknowledgments to him for all the pleasure and information I have derived from his correspondence, and for the obliging attention he has shown to all the letters I have transmitted to him. To *you* I will not observe the form of acknowledgments; because, under the long friendship which has existed between us, I have had the good fortune to enjoy a full participation in all the details of your late important and glorious negotiation, from its birth to its conclusion. But I most cordially congratulate you on the satisfactory feelings which must remain upon your mind, in the result of that transaction; upon the solid credit which you have

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acquired; and, in fine, upon the beneficent tendency of the whole affair, to the interests of humanity, and to the tranquillity of Europe.

If quiet continues in the Netherlands, and upon the borders of France, I imagine that you will now wish to make your correspondence revert to the ordinary course of the post; and whatever loss may arise from it to this mission, I cannot be so selfish as to wish to the contrary. I leave this to your reflections, assuring you most cheerfully that I have no wish but to see the business go on to the best advantage. If *you* remain at Vienna, and *I* return here, I think we may establish a very useful circular correspondence with whoever shall be at Berlin.

At present, I am in all the bustle of preparation for a short excursion to England. Lord Henry Spencer remains here as *chargé d'affaires*. I warmly recommend him to your confidence and favourable regards. Though very young, he possesses an excellent disposition for his career, and the most *consummate* discretion. The fleeting fault of being young, will, unfortunately for him, as for his predecessors—diminish every day. You have ever had the generous disposition to encourage and advance young men of promising talents; and you cannot have a better subject than the one now pointed out. Lord Henry will write to you if anything occurs here that may interest you, and will be happy to receive any commands from you.

Lord Elgin passed through this place last week. He had not been fairly treated by his colleague in Italy. In other respects, I do not consider the treaty of the 25th July as a subject of any uneasiness to England—*au contraire, à plusieurs égards*. The conferences of Pilnitz seem not to have produced any decision for active measures; perhaps it is best to have left the mad democracy to its own inventions. It will gradually, and

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soon show to mankind the folly of attempting to ground a great government on abstract principles.

I am not quite easy as to the state of the Austrian Netherlands. There has been in that transaction a most unaccountable conduct at the Court where you reside. If they had acceded frankly and cordially, to the fair and friendly views of the maritime powers, they might have had a secure and permanent possession; at present it is, and will be, of a very different description.

Believe me, dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO HIS SISTERS.

Vienna, Sept. 15th, 1791.

WHILST a courier from London is galloping to Vienna with all manner of pleasing and honourable tidings to me, I seize an hour of leisure to give you, my dear sisters, some account of my final transactions at Sistovo, and of my journey homewards. You know all about the tokens of distinction heaped on us the day the peace was *signed;* now for the exchange of the ratifications, a conclusive step on which the Turks laid infinite stress, and one where they judged my presence so indispensably necessary, that although I had the King's permission, (nay, even injunction,) to return with all convenient speed, to Vienna, I determined, and have since been applauded from *home* for so doing—to wait a fortnight, in order to put the finishing hand to everything, and to make the treaty of Sistovo the most complete work, as I trust it is the most *durable*, of the diplomatic kind which have been terminated for half a century. The slowness of the two Imperial Courts protracted my stay till the 23rd, and in that interval I had one of the greatest pleasures, and on the other hand, one of the most severe trials I could possibly

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experience. I learned with the highest satisfaction that our peace, and our most earnest remonstrances, and entreaties at the Porte, and with the Grand Vizier, had produced the immediate result of the signature of the preliminary articles of peace between the Russians and Turks. This was, to the *British* administration, the most important and least expected of all political events. I am convinced that ministry feel that service rendered to their country as giving a tenfold value to the Sistovo treaty.

On the same day (the 16th August) that I sent those glad tidings to England, I was seized with a violent, but regular fit of the Bulgarian ague; and I had it pretty smartly on the 18th, 20th, and 23rd. Yet still I determined to set out on my return, the 23rd, an hour after the exchange of the ratifications. A German physician belonging to Count Esterhazy, told me I might travel with safety, lying by on the ague days. On the 23rd, the last ceremony was performed, and the Turks on that occasion, (as on several of the preceding ones) expressed by order of their sovereign, the most sincere gratitude towards the mediating Courts, and the highest esteem for the mediating ministers.

As a proof of those sentiments, I should tell you, my dear Anne, that on the 22nd, Prince Morusi, principal dragoman of the Porte, waited upon each of the mediators separately, and after the handsomest compliments in the name of his sovereign, he presented to each of us, an order sent by the Grand Signor upon his treasury, for thirty thousand piastres, to pay the expense of our journey homewards. That sum, according to the actual value of the debased Turkish coin, may amount to about 2300*l*. Our allowance for provisions had been so ample, that there remained likewise a surplus to be received on that score. So much for money. At the instant when the ratifications were delivered, each of us was again

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invested with a *valuable* sable pelisse; and as I immediately shook hands *kindly* with all my Turkish and Christian colleagues in order to cross the Danube, I found in the court of the Congress house, another prancing Turkish steed (a better one than the first,) superbly caparisoned; being a last gift from Sultan Selim. With this token of his munificence, I returned home to get on my travelling dress; but not till I had given *six gold watches*, and many many small sums of money to *all* those Turks who had been employed to decorate, and to mount me, &c. &c.

I now take leave of Sistovo, my dear Anne, with inward satisfaction at having resided there, and heartfelt joy at getting away from it. I am now crossing the Danube in a fine Turkish barge, and firing my cannon; my four carriages and twenty servants are waiting for me on the Wallachian side; my heavy baggage and Turkish horses (to mount Stratton and Stuart) are to follow me by slow degrees; and now blessings from thirty Turkish throats, and I am in my chaise with two companions, honest Stuart and filthy tertian ague. The latter I was determined to fast down, and from that day to this I have not swallowed one atom of animal food. I travelled rapidly on my good days, and swallowed a little English bark; I made short stages on my *mawkish* days (for the ague soon abated), and ate nothing but thin soup and spinach. So I got to Vienna in twelve days and a half, with only a memorandum of the ague once in two days; as much as to say, "I am not yet gone, but preparing to go." Now, I can hardly distinguish one day from the other. *Punctum.*

And so, Mr. Robert (say you), you have come back again within a very small distance of Trajan's bridge, and know nothing more of that sweet bridge than when you passed it in a foggy day last December! The accusation is false, Mrs. Anne; I went (ague and all) to

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the very BRIDGE itself, and to the Severiner Tower, and Stuart measured them; and what is more, we brought away stone, and brick, and mortar, in large lumps from each of them, and I am to get them polished and set in snuff-boxes, and you shall take your pinch with a bit of Trajan and of his mortar directly under *your nose;* —what say you to that? And I have a collection of models, and I have *ten* Trajans, and as many Adrians and Severus's; and I have Philip of Macedon, and I have Lysimachus, and I have Titus's daughter with her *strange curls,* and I have Alexander the Great, *fresh* as when he came from the Mint, and as comely a fellow as ever you saw. And now get me home to Scotland as fast as you can, for I am a *treasure* in the way of cracks.*

Heaven send us all a speedy and happy meeting.

R. M. K.

Note from Prince Kaunitz, accompanying the gift of the Emperor Leopold's picture:—

À MONSIEUR LE CHEVALIER DE KEITH, ETC., ETC.

À Vienne, Nov. 3ème, 1791.

L'EMPEREUR voulant témoigner à Monsieur l'Envoyé Extraordinaire, et Ministre Plénipotentiaire du Roi de la Grande Brétagne, le Chevalier de Keith, le cas que fait Sa Majesté des soins que ce Ministre a donnès à la conclusion de la paix de Sistovo,—chargé le Chancelier de Cour et d'Etat, de remettre à Monsieur le Chevalier la boîte ornée du portrait de Sa Majesté Imperiale ci-auprès.†

Et le Chancelier, en s'acquittant d'un ordre aussi agréable, a l'honneur en même tems, de réitérer à Monsieur l'Envoyé Extraordinaire, les assurances de sa considération très distinguée.

* *Anglicè,* chit-chat.

† A truly Imperial gift, of uncommon value and beauty.

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The five or six months immediately succeeding the return of Sir R. M. Keith from Sistovo, seems (from the very minute and interesting dispatches transmitted by him to Lord Grenville), to have been arduously and painfully employed in tracing and recording the fluctuations of counsels and opinions in the Austrian cabinet, regarding a rupture with France, which it seems probable, in spite of the suspension of active measures occasioned by the French King's acceptance of the constitution, would have taken place even had the life of the reigning Emperor been prolonged.

The increasing, perhaps natural efforts of the emigrant princes of the blood to invoke Austrian intervention, the madness and insolence of the National Assembly, on which *they* chiefly relied, as likely to exasperate the Emperor and his ministers; and, finally, the increasing danger of his sister and his family (with the pretext afforded for interference on behalf of the frontier princes of the empire), all seemed verging towards the actual commencement of hostilities, when the following communications (whose interest has been revived by the recent events in France) took place on the part of the British minister to his official principal. On the 14th January, 1792, Sir R. Keith thus writes to Lord Grenville:—

"It will not surprise your lordship to learn that the transactions at Paris in the last days of December, the haughty style assumed by the National Assembly in their decrees respecting Germany, and the threatening tenor of the French King's message to that meeting, have occasioned very disagreeable sensations here. The French ambassador received by a courier, on Wednesday, an official communication, which he delivered to Prince Kaunitz the same day, and the incident gave rise to a general report that a French invasion on the territory of Turin and Mentz was to be expected.

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"Whilst the minds of men were agitated by the intelligence from Paris, the arrival, on the morning of Thursday, of the (pretended) Prince of Nassau, from Coblentz, gave a new spur to the curiosity of the public, to discover the nature of the commission with which he was charged by the Bourbon princes. He was admitted, on the same forenoon, to an audience of the Emperor, and he held, before night, two long conferences with Prince Kaunitz. My endeavours, in this critical conjuncture, have been most assiduous to collect authentic information, and I trust that the following particulars may be relied on. This Court, though much embarrassed, and not less alarmed, by the actual posture of affairs, continues to have recourse to palliatives only, and has hitherto adopted no steady or vigorous plan of conduct, and the evil day of decision is put off as long as possible.

"I am convinced, however, my lord, that this Court at length conceives the imminent danger of a rupture with France, and will proceed to make serious military preparations, on the first intelligence from Paris, that the measures they have employed towards the French cabinet are likely to prove ineffectual. With all this, I remain in the conviction that the reluctance of the Emperor to draw the sword is in no respect diminished, notwithstanding that he has been heard to say, within these ten days, that if the French madmen were determined to force him into a war, they should find that the pacific Leopold knew how to wage it with the greatest vigour, and would oblige them to pay the expenses of that war, in something more solid than *assignats*.

"Ibid.

"The resolution of this Court to march, very speedily, six thousand men towards the French frontier, and to hold in readiness a body of thirty thousand for the same purpose, is so publicly talked of here, that it must be

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the wish of this Court to give the greatest degree of credibility to that warlike preparation. I own that I cannot discover a rational motive for this sudden and ostentatious display of vigorous measures, which are little of a piece with the known principles of this reign; and may, in my humble opinion, possibly rekindle French jealousy, at a time when it appears to be gradually subsiding. I am positively assured, and in the *utmost confidence*, by a person of undoubted credit, that all this is nothing more than an empty parade, and I have every reason to believe that this information may be relied on. Yet still the expediency of a demonstration of this nature, and at the present moment, remains to me an inexplicable mystery.

"I am but too often in the case of not being able to comprehend the conduct of this Cabinet, and perhaps your lordship will find it as difficult as I do, to discover the wisdom of a recent affront which (as I am assured by the advice of Prince Kaunitz) has been put on the French National Assembly. The decree by which they commanded the dispersion of the Brabant emigrants in French Flanders, has been sent back by this Court as inadmissible here, because it was promulgated by that Assembly, and not by the French King himself.

"21*st*.

"The Prince of Nassau makes no secret to his friends of the ill success of his negotiation here. He finds that some favourable assurances which the Emperor gave him, in his first audience, have been explained away by the Austrian ministers. They paid no attention to a plan he proposed of military operations, in favour of the Bourbon princes; and I understand that the only advice this ministry has conveyed through him to the French emigrants, is to remain quiet in the places of refuge which have been assigned to them.

"The steps which are taking here towards forming an

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army of observation, are wholly unconnected with that prince's commission. The wish of this Court is to show a ready compliance with the suggestion of his Prussian Majesty, by preparing to support their joint language at Paris. They are desirous to cement all their future proceedings with the Court of Berlin, and intend to propose that the two Courts (when perfectly agreed on those matters) should make an explicit declaration to the French government, on the points which they have particularly in view, and on which their joint attention to the future welfare and tranquillity of Europe, makes it their duty to insist in the strongest manner.

"These objects are said to be four in number. The security of the French royal family, and the maintenance of the monarchical form of government in that kingdom; the restitution of all the possessions and rights of the German princes in the French dominions; the same justice to be done to the Pope, by restoring the county of Avignon; and lastly, a general amnesty in favour of the princes of the blood and their adherents, on reasonable conditions. The two Courts to notify, hereafter, the above declaration to the principal Courts of Europe, requesting their concurrence and co-operation.

"This, my lord, is the rough draught of a decisive measure the Court of Vienna is thought to have in serious contemplation, but of which the execution may still be at a considerable distance. I am assured that the Empress of Russia has renewed, (by a messenger who arrived here two days ago) her earnest exhortation to the Emperor to assist the princes of the blood, by a military force, in an immediate attack on France. Your lordship will judge how ineffectual that request is likely to prove at the present juncture.

"R. M. K."

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"28th.

"The contents of the decree of the National Assembly of the 14th instant, with respect to the Emperor and Empire, occasioned much surprise here, after the arrival of the last French post. I have occasion to know that Prince Kaunitz had, in the evening of yesterday, no authentic information on that head: as he publicly denied all belief of such a manifest proof of what he termed the insolence of the French National Assembly. It likewise appears strange that the French mission had, last night, no ministerial communication of the said fact, and I do not hear that Monsieur de Noailles has received a courier from Paris. I take notice of these particulars in order to show that my utmost attention is turned to discover what effect that very rash step on the part of the French government may produce here. I need hardly remark to your lordship that, if the French be really in earnest, to act up to the terms of the above-mentioned decree, new and very vigorous measures must be taken here, and without any delay, to be properly prepared for the explosion of French foolhardiness.

"I am not surprised at Prince Kaunitz's professed incredulity last night, because he is accustomed to suppose that his pen carries conviction and terror to whatever quarter its dictates are directed, and that he will refuse, to the last possible moment, to believe that any nation can set his own logic, or the power of this monarchy, at defiance.

"*February* 1*st.*

"A courier from Paris brought to the French ambassador, on Saturday evening, a letter from the French Secretary of State to Monsieur de Noailles, which the latter communicated to the Vice-Chancellor, Count Cobenzel, and afterwards to Prince Kaunitz, in a long conference on Monday. I feel that it is of the utmost

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consequence to discover the real sensation which the last communication from France has occasioned here, and the probable effect of it. I shall be very cautious not to mislead your lordship on a point of so great moment, and must therefore suspend my judgment for a few days.

"Notwithstanding that the French Secretary of State has undoubtedly conveyed the requisitions of the National Assembly, in as mild and temperate language as the nature of them could possibly admit of, there is great reason to believe that such peremptory questions have hurt and perplexed Prince Kaunitz to a very high degree. His first suggestions to the Emperor will probably have been, at least, very firm, if not haughty. But as that monarch dreads nothing so much as war, and is well aware that his next step in the French affairs must prove, in a great measure, decisive—I am almost certain that he will delay his reply to France till he has consulted his new ally and bosom friend, the King of Prussia. This opinion has been this instant confirmed by the person who has at this juncture the most free access to the secrets of this Court. It remains to be seen how the National Assembly will relish this slow method of proceeding.

"R. M. K."

[*Secret*].

Vienna, February 4th, 1792.

YOUR lordship will forgive my beginning this letter by saying that a man in my situation, who is carefully debarred by the Austrian ministry from the smallest share in their secrets, has a very difficult task, in tracing out, with any degree of certainty, the sudden variations of blustering vanity and timid irresolution, which occasion the desultory conduct of this cabinet.

Four days ago it was determined that no answer

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should be given to France till the purport of it should have been concerted with the Court of Berlin. This was called cool and deliberate courage; and it was supposed that no mode of proceeding was so proper to intimidate the rash boasters of the French councils.

To-day (as I have good ground to think) another idea predominates, and it has been resolved to give a speedy answer to Monsieur de Nosilles, and without consulting the tardy ally at Berlin. This step is now imagined to be the surest proof of unshaken magnanimity; and such it will be, if the language of that reply keeps pace with the Emperor's preceding declarations.

But, my lord, I in my conscience believe that I traduce the character of no great man in Austria by manifesting a suspicion, that the fear of a rupture with France has, at this moment, so far the upper hand, that it is more than probable the style of this cabinet will, in some measure, betray that secret in the ministerial office, which is to be delivered to the French ambassador.

I beg of your lordship to look upon this intelligence as tolerably authentic for the present hour; I dare not warrant that my report by next post may not be in contradiction to it.

It must be confessed, that in consequence of the many half measures, and abortive projects of this government, during the last two years, in respect to politics, finances, and military system, the monarchy is at present less able to meet a foreign war with becoming firmness, than at any period during a long course of years.

February 8th.

On Monday evening the French ambassador received a courier from Paris, with a new ministerial office, which he communicated yesterday to Prince Kaunitz,

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in a private conference. It is believed to relate to the decree of the National Assembly of the 25th January, although that decree had not been sanctioned by the French King.

The sentiments of the French nation towards the Emperor have manifested themselves of late with so much acrimony, that it is difficult to imagine any degree of mitigation, in point of form or style, which can have rendered the commission of Monsieur de Noailles palatable to this Court. I have this instant learned that at the same time that he acquainted this Court that the King, his master, had put his *veto* on the decree of the National Assembly, he renewed his most pressing instances to engage the Emperor to give a speedy and satisfactory answer to his two ministerial offices, no reply having hitherto been made to either. I believe this Court is extremely puzzled how to maintain the Emperor's dignity, without adding fresh fuel to the French animosity.

February 15*th*.

My Prussian colleague has seen the minute of the answer of this Court to France. He thinks it well drawn up, with becoming dignity, and yet in terms which indicate the spirit of moderation and conciliation. It recapitulates, and justifies the whole conduct of the Emperor towards France, and proves that this Court is far from harbouring any hostile views against that kingdom. It denies all intentions whatever of spreading a counter-revolution; and alleges that the French King himself, by assembling the States General of his monarchy, had owned the necessity of new modelling the constitution, and had laid the foundation of that reformation. That the concert formed between several powers, relative to the French affairs, had arisen from the *then* existing troubles in France; the imminent danger to which the Royal Family was exposed; and

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from motives essentially connected with the safety of their own territories. That the effect of the before-mentioned concert had been suspended by the French King's free acceptance of the constitution; that nothing but the renewal of the same dangers, and the prospect of the most sinister events, could call for the prosecution of such a concert; and that the Emperor remains in the most unfeigned disposition to show himself the friend and ally of the French nation.

This is nearly the purport of it, as I have been able to gather it from a rapid conversation with my colleague, who, on being asked his opinion of it, and if he had such objection to its contents as to render necessary its being submitted to his Prussian Majesty, thought it safer to approve of its delivery in the present form than to have a reference made to his Court, which he judged to be contrary to its wishes.

18th.

The contents of the answer are nearly such as I mentioned in my last letter. Baron Jacobi observed to Monsieur Spielman (when the latter showed him the paper) that two expressions it contained might perhaps produce a disagreeable effect on the irascible minds of the French leaders; the one in which the maintenance of the monarchical dignity in that country is stated among the possible motives for foreign intervention; and the other where, in distinguishing between the wise and moderate part of the National Assembly, and those members of it who appear to be actuated by very opposite principles—the latter are styled *frénétiques*.

I have learned that the French ambassador is of opinion that the Emperor's desire to avoid a rupture with France is sufficiently indicated in the paper; but he deplores the insertion of several phrases in it, and particularly the mention of the Jacobin Club, as the instigators of the rash measures of the National Assembly.

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These expressions, he thinks, cannot fail to hurt the moderate men in that assembly, and will be eagerly seized by those who wish to create a quarrel, as a proof that the Emperor seeks to interfere in their internal affairs, and holds a language injurious to the patriotic party. Be this as it may, the decision of peace or war with the Emperor rests henceforth with the National Assembly.

R. M. K.

It was transferred ere long to a higher and more irresistible umpire. After the interval of little more than a year, Sir R. M. Keith (within a week from the above) was again called on to intimate to his Court the demise of the occupant of the Imperial throne.

So sudden and unlooked for was this event, that the following notice (in a P.S. of the 29th February) precedes but by one day the tidings of the fatal termination:—"I am sorry to acquaint your lordship that the Emperor has been much indisposed since yesterday morning, with an inflammatory fever. He has been twice bled, and I hear (although there is *nothing alarming* in his illness) that a consultation of physicians has ordered a third bleeding this evening."

[*By my servant Ferguson.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, March 1st, 1792.

My Lord,

I am indeed heartily sorry to find myself once more under the melancholy obligation of announcing to his Majesty the vacancy of the Imperial throne; the Emperor Leopold having died this afternoon, about four o'clock, of an inflammatory fever, which, falling on his bowels, resisted all the power of medicine, and carried him off very suddenly, in the third day of his illness.

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An indisposition of long continuance, of which I made mention in my letter of 29th October, probably laid the foundation of the fatal malady. But the Emperor was so well in health on Monday last, that the Empress, and all the younger part of the royal family, were at the opera, on the evening of that day. It was not till the morning of Tuesday, that the inflammation appeared; and no serious apprehensions were entertained, till late last night. After four bleedings, and the application of several different remedies, his Imperial Majesty found himself easier this morning; but between three and four in the afternoon, the disease rose at once, to the highest pitch, and he expired, after a few minutes of agony.

It is needless to say that this sad event has plunged the royal family into the deepest affliction.

I shall use the utmost diligence in dispatching my valet-de-chambre with these letters to England, as soon as the Imperial post-office shall be permitted to furnish horses to the couriers of foreign ministers.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, March 1st, 1792.

My Lord,

As my servant, who is the bearer of the mournful tidings of the Emperor's demise, will not be allowed post-horses for several hours, I think it my duty to throw upon paper a few thoughts which suggest themselves to my mind (at the moment of that unforeseen event) touching the person and character of the new King of Hungary, and the situation in which he stands in several different points of view.

At the age of four-and-twenty years his constitution,

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which was never very robust, seems to be in some degree shaken by the consequences of a violent tertian ague which he contracted in the Turkish war. During his late illness (mentioned in my preceding letters) he is said to have spit blood several times, but not to any alarming degree. What is to be feared at present is, that the violent shock of his father's decease, and the immense load of public business which falls so suddenly on his shoulders, may prove detrimental to his health, the re-establishment of which was announced to the public only ten days ago.

The train of life which he has led, both during the reign of his uncle and father, has been so much confined within the walls of the Imperial palace, and the communication which men in public character have had with this prince has been so constantly restricted to the narrow line of conventional duty, that perhaps no heir of a crown, arrived at the age of manhood, was ever less known to the higher classes of his father's subjects, or to the *corps diplomatique*.

What adds to the difficulty of forming a solid judgment in relation to what may be expected from his future reign, is this singular circumstance, that his education as an heir-apparent has gone through two distinct stages, as different in point of maxim and method as can well be imagined; so that nothing but experience can teach us what will be the result of the strong, rapid, and vehement precepts of government harshly impressed on his youthful mind by the imperious genius of the Emperor Joseph, or the cautious and fluctuating advice of his deceased father; who accustomed him to take some share in the laborious part of public business, but who, being himself in the prime of life, and naturally supposing that his son had many years before him to acquire the science of government, was (as I am told) less in a hurry than the late Emperor had been, to give

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him a full view of all the springs of government, and a complete knowledge of the *weak* as well as *strong* parts of the great machine, which Providence has now committed to his guidance.

One quality of the Archduke's character has been long and generally established. He is known to be an honest man, fraught with the best and most upright intentions to fulfil his duties in every station with justice and humanity; and we have never heard even the slightest suspicion of his mind being tainted with a propensity to any vice which can sully his fame either as a man or a monarch. His talents, in as far as we have been witnesses to any exertion of them, appear to be sound and useful. To say more, with so small a share of authentic information or personal observation as has fallen to my lot, would be to run the risk of imposing on your lordship by a precipitate, and, therefore, an unwarrantable judgment.

King Francis finds, most assuredly, a very populous and powerful monarchy; not, indeed, in a state of unimpaired vigour; the reigns of the two last sovereigns having, in some measure, exhausted its resources for a little time. But the natural strength of it has not been dangerously wounded in any vital part (the Netherlands' alone excepted), and a few years of steady and pacific government would, in all probability, restore it to its former flourishing state.

The Austrian army has, within a few years, been lowered considerably, both in regard to numbers and energy of spirit; and the nature itself of the Turkish war, joined (as I am afraid) to several other concurring circumstances, has occasioned some relaxation in its military discipline. However, the young King had an opportunity of acquiring very just principles of military knowledge under Marshal Laudohn, and (as we hear it affirmed on all sides) he had likewise the happiness to

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imbibe, from the maxims of that general, as well as from his own experience of the dreadful calamities which follow wars of ambition, a sincere and deep-rooted aversion to offensive warfare. From such premises we have a right to presume, that this prince is so far acquainted with the military profession as to make a proper choice of the means to restore his army to its former vigour, and that he will be in no way prodigal of the blood of his subjects. The finances of this monarchy are undoubtedly at a very low ebb, which adds a double cogency to every motive for preserving peace with all his neighbours.

But the great question to be resolved at this moment rests, according to my humble opinion, not with *him*, but with the French National Assembly; and the die is probably cast before this time, as the Emperor's last declaration made at Paris seemed calculated to draw on an immediate and definitive decision on the part of the leaders of the French council. If, however, the door be still left open to amicable accommodation, I am pretty confident that the King of Hungary himself and his principal adviser, Prince Kaunitz (whose ascendancy in the present conjuncture will be greater than ever), will gladly embrace every means of conciliation which can be devised, without the manifest sacrifice of the honour of the Crown, or the infallible forfeiture of the esteem of the principal members of the Germanic body, whose suffrages King Francis will no doubt solicit, and without delay, for his election to the Imperial dignity.

Your lordship perceives that I make no doubt of Prince Kaunitz's being immediately entrusted with all the powers which hereditary regard, and the timidity of an inexperienced prince, can throw into his hands. I hesitate the less in delivering this opinion, as I see no other person near to the throne who could undertake (nor to whom the King could with any safety

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entrust) the charge of public business at this unforeseen crisis.

I crave your lordship's indulgence for these hasty observations amidst a scene of general affliction and consternation, which is very apparent in this capital. The pacific disposition of the late Emperor had rendered him dear to the bulk of his subjects, who, being impressed with the fear of an impending war with France, seem discouraged at finding themselves under the government of a young and inexpert sovereign.

R. M. K.

March 7th.

The public interment of the deceased Emperor took place in the evening of yesterday, and his remains were deposited nigh to those of his royal ancestors, in the vault of the Capuchin Convent in this city. The general mourning will last six months.

I am sincerely grieved to be obliged to mention the alarming situation of the health of the Dowager Empress, who is extremely beloved by all ranks of people in this country. A slight bleeding on Sunday evening had so far alleviated the feverish complaint of the preceding day, that the *Grande Maîtresse* gave us, on Monday, the assurance that her Imperial Majesty was almost completely recovered. But, unfortunately, the rheumatic fever returned, with more violence, in the evening of yesterday, and we are very sorry to learn this morning that it has been found necessary to bleed the Empress three times, and that she has called for the Sacraments of the Romish Church, which will be administered to her this forenoon. I shall add a postscript to this letter, in the evening, and I hope with more favourable accounts.

I have renewed my old acquaintance with General Bischoffswerder, at Prince Kaunitz's assembly, and I

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should have been glad to have had a more intimate intercourse with a person who stands so high in the favour of his Prussian Majesty, the ally of England. But Monsieur Bischoffswerder has hitherto given me no indication of a similar disposition, and I must therefore leave that matter entirely to his choice. He and his particular friends will dine at my house on Tuesday next.

[*Secret.*]

I have let the Prussian favourite know, by a sure hand, that he can see me every day, and at any hour. I am not a little surprised to find that he carries here his exhortation to immediate and vigorous measures against France, to a much higher pitch than could well have been imagined. He may have adopted that style on the principle (mentioned in my last letter) of doing honour to the elevated sentiments of his sovereign. But it would seem that he has it particularly at heart to proclaim, very loudly, the martial resolutions of his Prussian Majesty.

I have learned with pleasure, that the King of Prussia had advised the late Emperor, and had obtained that Prince's promise to write to his Britannic Majesty, along with the intended notification of their defensive alliance, to invite our sovereign to become a party in the new bond of friendship, recently contracted between Austria and Prussia. It was not to be merely an invitation to accede to the treaty, (lately concluded) but, if that could not take place, to bring on a treaty of defensive alliance between the King and himself. It is believed that the King of Hungary is disposed to take the same amicable step towards his Majesty, but not till after the first hurry of his accession shall be over. I think myself fortunate in being able to give your lordship timely notice of such a probable intention.

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If Prince Kaunitz should hereafter open himself to me on the subject, I shall take everything strictly *ad referendum*. I must not omit to mention that within these *four days* that minister's behaviour towards me is wonderfully altered. He now shows me all the distinctions of a trusty favourite. But I am not the dupe of his trifling coquetry, though I receive it with the utmost politeness. I should not have taken notice of this circumstance, if it did not indicate some change in the disposition of this Court.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

P.S.—The Empress is somewhat easier this evening, but still the danger is very great.

March 14*th*.

My Lord,

The Empress's health is daily improving, and there are the best hopes of its speedy and entire re-establishment.

His Hungarian Majesty has sent an order to all the departments of government, to pay no attention whatever to anonymous informations, which had proved the source of great trouble and inquietude during the last two reigns. He has likewise extended the liberty of the press, by permitting a free discussion in print, of the future measures of his government. From these two instances, his subjects are disposed to draw a happy presage of the just and liberal spirit of his reign. He did Prince Kaunitz the honour of making him a visit, yesterday, at his house, and remained two hours in private conversation with that minister.

I find it extremely difficult to establish a solid judgment relative to the spirit of the answer which is soon to be given by this Court to the late communication from Paris. I have some reason to think the King of

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Hungary wishes to unite dignity with moderation; that the Prussian favourite suggests not only a firm, but even a high language; that Prince Kaunitz is inclined to temperate measures; that Baron Spielman talks alternately in the style of haughtiness and of conciliation, and that Baron Jacobi (on whose penetration I am inclined to lay great stress) remains in the opinion that, amidst these various sentiments, the intimate conviction of the inability of this monarchy to undertake a new war, with any prospect of solid advantage, must, in the end, preponderate, and turn the tide, definitively, in favour of accommodation.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

March 21*st*, 1792.

The answer of this Court to the last ministerial office from France was delivered on Sunday evening to the French ambassador, who sent it immediately, by courier, to Paris. From all I have heard of the contents, the French government will learn from them that the sentiments of the new sovereign are the same with those of his deceased father, and his desire to maintain peace no less fervent. However, it is to be apprehended that that party in France which is known by the appellation of Jacobins, and whose influence in the National Assembly has of late predominated, may have the power, as well as the wish, of resenting and avenging the very strong imputations which are again laid to their charge in the new declaration from hence. But I need not trespass on your lordship's time by entering into further particulars relative to that State paper, which (according to the custom established in the actual government of France) will be printed in the Parisian papers, and be received in London before this paper comes into your lordship's hands.

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The wild enthusiasm which impels the French nation at this moment, to accelerate a rupture with the House of Austria, may perhaps furnish to M. Bischoffswerder a better justification for his unwearied instigations to war in this cabinet, than his own very moderate abilities could have laid hold of.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, May 8th, 1792.

My Lord,

At the commencement of a war between France and Austria, which has not only burst asunder the unnatural ties which, for upwards of forty years, had connected these rival powers, but will, in all likelihood, be ultimately productive of an entire new system in Europe, it will be expected that I should give your lordship a general sketch of the actual state of this monarchy in respect to the government, finances, and military force. I shall deliver my opinion with the utmost frankness as well as candour, but I beg it may be understood that I speak with diffidence touching the character of the young monarch, whose personal qualities and mental powers have not yet been put to a fair and conclusive trial.

I assured your lordship in a former letter that his Apostolic Majesty is endued with sound (but not transcendent) talents, upright principles, and a natural steadiness of mind which may, when his faculties shall be ripened by experience, keep the effective government in his own hands. At present, he is actuated by circumstances which preceded his accession, and directed by men in office, who have grown old in the possession of much greater sway than either their parts, or their success in administration, could justly entitle them to hold. Their ascendancy, established and maintained

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during the long reign of Maria Theresa, was wholly suspended in the lifetime of the Emperor Joseph; but it had recovered all its preponderance during the dubious and versatile reign of the Emperor Leopold. In the meantime, Prince Kaunitz enjoys, in supercilious state, all the prerogatives of a veteran and despotic prime minister, who, sitting supinely in his own closet, and without even paying, in three successive reigns, a single visit to his sovereign, pronounces political oracles, whenever he is consulted in the first instance.

I am now to mention the finances of this country, a matter in regard to which much mystery is affected here; and it has been rendered almost impenetrable by a rapid succession of reigns, and many fluctuations in the measure of taxation, and in the mode of collecting the public revenue. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to know what is the real balance of income and expenditure here. Leaving that subject in general to future elucidation, I need only observe, that the royal treasury is known to be very much exhausted; and that some of the ministers have been heard to declare, when the prospect of a new war drew near, that the King would be under the necessity of laying on his people the heavy war tax, to find the means of carrying on the *first* campaign. But since the war has been actually declared by France, his Hungarian Majesty has greatly endeared himself to his subjects, by publicly declaring that no additional tax shall be imposed for two years to come.

Very few persons in this country are acquainted with the nature and extent of the resources which the sovereign has found; a few millions of florins lately borrowed in the Low Countries, as many in Holland, and a small sum at Frankfort, could not suffice to render the war tax unnecessary. But I hear it credibly asserted, that the reigning family has long been in possession of

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a common fund, arising from the inheritance of their forefathers, and destined to form the portions of the younger branches of it.

This fund has, by accumulation of interest, risen to a very large amount, and is vested in the Bank of Vienna under different names. The whole royal family, of the present generation, being now assembled here, have, by unanimous consent, given the entire disposal of that fund to King Francis, to meet the present exigency, and to be replaced in better times.

The conjectures I have heard touching the amount of this supply, differ so widely that I cannot take on me to mention a specific sum. But from this and other sources, your lordship may be assured that King Francis has the money necessary for two campaigns within his reach.

The Austrian army, though much fallen off from its former energy and discipline, is still composed of excellent materials, particularly in respect of the private soldiers. If the troops, on their approach to the frontiers, keep free of all contagion of French license and turbulence, the strong emulation which must necessarily arise from acting in conjunction with the best disciplined army in Europe, will, in all likelihood, revive the same energy and *esprit de corps* which animated the Austrians in the Seven Years' war; and the example of Prussian regularity, and subordination, may become the best cure for that sort of relaxation, which the Turkish war produced among the Imperial troops. Such a happy result is the more probable, as Prince Hohenlohe, the Austrian commander, is himself a rigid disciplinarian. A general reform of the internal economy of the army is still in agitation. Marshal Lacy, who, for twenty years, held the sole direction of military matters, is extremely tenacious of that plan he himself established. Yet he now feels that he must, in the end, submit to many and great alterations in that system.

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Having thus thrown the best lights I am able, on the powers which this monarchy can exert, in the prosecution of a foreign war, I shall endeavour to give some account of its political situation in respect to other kingdoms.

It is with sincere concern that I must, in the first place, acquaint your lordship that the most unaccountable suspicions are daily increasing in the Austrian cabinet that a secret enmity subsists in England against the Court of Vienna. They pretend to have found a confirmation of those absurd suspicions in the delay of the election at Frankfort, which the King's adherence (in his electoral capacity) to the rules laid down by the Golden Bull, has occasioned.

The *reverse* of these opinions is well known to me, from your lordship's last instructions. But such has been the reserve kept up towards me for several months, and so striking the coldness manifested at the present crisis by Prince Kaunitz, that without committing the King's dignity to a very great degree, I cannot find the means of combating these unjust suspicions, unless I am honoured with your lordship's injunctions to demand an audience of the sovereign, or to force Prince Kaunitz to canvas those topics with me in a private conference, and to hold an explicit language to that minister in the King's name. I learn that Prince Kaunitz very recently expressed his hope that England will think herself under obligations to declare against France, if the latter power shall make an irruption into the Austrian Netherlands. He has never touched on this matter to me, nor do I wish that he should—since I am determined to answer no one question which may be put to me on that head, till I am favoured with his Majesty's commands for my guidance in it. Your lordship may be assured that all my language has been, and shall be, in exact conformity to your instructions, and such as

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becomes the strict neutrality which his Majesty has embraced, and so scrupulously adheres to.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

R. M. K.

[*Separate.*]

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, May 8th, 1792.

My Lord,

The declaration of war which France has published against Austria, throws an insuperable bar in the way of an immediate negotiation of alliance between our Court and that of Vienna; as the King has, in his wisdom, adopted the resolution of maintaining the strictest neutrality in the French affairs.

In such a state of things, there remains not the smallest opening for any useful exertion of my zeal for the advancement of his Majesty's service at this Court. I, therefore, find myself at liberty to express to your lordship an earnest wish, which the shock my health sustained at Sistovo, and various circumstances respecting my personal concerns and comforts, have very strongly suggested to me for some months past; and which I am well convinced your lordship will judge to be neither ill-timed nor unreasonable.

After a mission of two years at Dresden, and a short, but very tempestuous one in Denmark, I have now completed a residence of *twenty* long years at Vienna. I have seen three reigns of the sovereigns of Austria brought to their conclusion; and I speak with disinterested frankness, in giving it as my opinion, that a fourth reign requires a fresh negotiator from England, with better spirits than I can at present boast of; as I must confess that mine are not a little jaded in following out the versatile politics of Austria through many tedious windings.

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From these ingenuous motives, I beg of your lordship to lay before his Majesty my dutiful request to obtain his permission to retire from the diplomatic career and to return to England, as soon as it shall be found convenient.

I gladly seize this occasion to acquit myself of an act of justice toward my friend and pupil, as well as of duty to the King's service, in recommending very strongly his Secretary of Legation, Mr. Stratton, to transact the public business here, after my departure, till the person shall arrive who is sent to fill my place. I pledge my word to your lordship that this gentleman (who has served eleven years with me in this capital) is possessed of such talents and principles as will enable him to fulfil whatever instructions your lordship may honour him with in a very satisfactory manner.

At the moment when I solicit our gracious sovereign's leave to retire from the political profession, I offer my most sincere and grateful thanks to your lordship, and to all his Majesty's confidential servants, for the favourable opinion of my past services, which they have had the goodness to express.

In mentioning my future prospects, I trust that I shall stand acquitted in the eyes of all my superiors, either of stooping to the affectation of false modesty, or of harbouring any degree of unjustifiable presumption. The strong assurances which your lordship has repeatedly conveyed to me of the King's indulgent acceptance of my unwearied exertions, inspire me with the sanguine hope of owing to my beneficent sovereign, such a public testimony of his gracious and lasting favour, as will stamp a value on the services of my life, and effectually enliven those unambitious and social years which may constitute the remainder of it.

R. M. K.

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LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, May 17th, 1792, at night.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Monsieur de Burt is so obliging as to furnish to me the occasion of sending a few lines to you by a courier, who leaves this place to-morrow. The notice is so short that I am obliged to crowd what I may have to say within the compass of a quarter of an hour. I wrote to you on the 15th, by the post.

Your servant arrived on the 16th, with your very interesting dispatches of the 8th. I forwarded him immediately; but, as there was a severe storm that day, I doubt whether he will have sailed before this morning.

I perused your two dispatches with great pleasure and advantage, and return many thanks to you for sending them through my hands. The idea that the British Cabinet (and particularly Lord Grenville) is unfavourably disposed towards the Court of Vienna, is also much circulated here; and, in truth, I have not taken any pains to remove it; because I have thought it likely to sink in its own groundlessness, and, at all events, of no material consequence. I have great reason to suppose that these reports have arisen from certain vivacities which make a great part of the correspondence of Monsieur de Stadion, and the gentleman mentioned at the head of this letter. *Quant au fond de la chose,* we certainly are not peculiarly enamoured of the Austrian ministry. The whole history of Reichenbach was not of a nature to inspire either love, or respect, or admiration; that of the convention of the Hague was still less so; and the conduct respecting the ratification was deficient both in good faith and good sense. It is, however, amply and sufficiently punished; and we stand relieved from a guarantee which we *were* willing to have taken and to have enforced.

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Our system, as far as I can learn, is to maintain our neutrality, unless circumstances should arise in the course and conduct of the war, to make it for the interest of the kingdom to swerve from that neutrality. Under that principle it is hardly probable that England will accede to the invitation now waiting for an answer. If the French had, in their "foolhardiness" (I thank you for the term), overrun Brabant and Flanders, and menaced or disturbed this country, I think our conduct might have been different, and we must have interfered to stop their progress. As it is, the allied army is likely to have easy work, as far as mere fighting is in question, though it may be hard work to effectuate any good settlement. If the Vienna ministers wish to be well with us, they should begin by meeting you with that frank and manly confidence on all occasions which you are so peculiarly entitled to, both by your personal and political character.

A word as to England. The bulk—under which word I comprise *nineteen-twentieths* of this nation, is contented, and decidedly anti-Gallican; and against all levelling or innovating ideas, and duly and fully sensible of their own unexampled prosperity. With such materials, and so vigilant a government, I feel no uneasiness, though the times are *very mad*. I send you two papers of the most recent date. There have been various little popular disturbances at London, Edinburgh, &c., which, though wholly unconnected with the wild and wicked theories of the French philosophers and missionaries, have yet been such as to merit a strict and steady attention in times like the present. Everything by the last letters was quiet, and *stocks rising*.

Ever, my dear Sir Robert,

Most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

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LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, May 29th.

MY DEAR SIR,

I seem to wait in vain for the return of your servant through this place from England. I write this, therefore, to say that all yours (to No. 50) have been received and forwarded.

The personal intention to which you allude, had already transpired, I believe first through your Belgian colleague, and afterwards from England. I sincerely regret it, for the sake of the service; and have expressed my sentiments thereon to the King's ministers in those terms of friendship and cordial esteem which present themselves when I have occasion to say anything respecting you and your long career—to twenty years of which I have been more or less a witness.

The events of Europe multiply with great rapidity, but it is difficult to reason on the subject so long as the views, conduct, and concert, of their Hungarian and Prussian Majesties remain, to a certain degree, unexplained. In the meantime, it is horrid to think that whatever may be the result, the measure will probably be productive of an effusion of human blood, far beyond any adequate necessity or interest. Poland might have continued half a century under the infirmities of her new constitution without giving any just cause of uneasiness to her neighbours.

A measure of precaution, which it has been thought right to take in England against the impudent and profligate votaries of the Jacobin worship, seems to have given a momentary alarm; but our government does not feel any serious uneasiness, and there is every reason to be confident that we may long maintain our quiet and prosperity; though in the *incertitude of human affairs* (of which we have lately seen such *marked and*

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multiplied instances), it would be presumptuous to *neglect any measure of vigilance*.

Yours,
AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

June 8th, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Your letters have been duly received and forwarded. Mine to you are sent always at the same time with those of the Dutch ministers. It is an idle transaction if they are put aside for one post, to be copied, et *tres maladroit*,* and also little worth while. The inaction on the frontiers of Flanders still prevails. The French commanders seem to find it unsafe to attempt to avail themselves of this most favourable moment that they can expect, for striking a blow. La Fayette has his *neck between two halters*, and it is sometimes reported that he is negotiating at Brussels, and sometimes that he is retiring from the command. I cannot feel compassion for his distress, and shall not be sorry to see it increased. It seems to me that the utter want of discipline, subordination, money, confidence, and communion of sentiment which now prevails in France, may make it easier to effectuate a counter-revolution than could have been imagined a few months ago.

I have just received a letter from Coblentz, in which there is the following paragraph:—"On dit que les armées réunies sous Luchner et La Fayette, tenteront une affaire générale du coté de Mons, vers le 15 de ce

* It is an amusing coincidence that this epithet should have been used by Prince Kaunitz to Sir R. M. Keith, on the latter complaining to him (and not without reason), that the *copies* surreptitiously taken, of his dispatches, had been returned to him instead of the *originals*. "Que ces gens sont *maladroits!*" was all the remark of the unabashed Austrian Minister.

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mois; qui'ls joueront de leur reste, et que les Autrichiens seront assez forts pour le leur gagner. Il serait possible que l'on trouvât que ces idées vont trop vîte." The accounts from England continue good.

Believe me, my dear Sir, ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

DEAR SIR, *Hague, June 15th.*

Your servant arrived at an early hour this morning. I have allowed him six or eight hours for refreshment. Nothing can be quieter than England. There is to my feelings, great and true glory in the wisdom of the national temper and conduct, amidst the *follies and madnesses of other nations;* and I think it will be so considered hereafter, in the sober page of history. When the letters came away all was quiet; the three per cents. were *ninety-three.* The revenue was comparatively higher than ever, and a small squadron preparing for exercise in the Channel. As to foreign politics, you will have heard that Spain is offering her mediation. *J'y trouve un petit brin de radotage,* and am astonished of my old friend, D'Aranda. The suspension of events on the frontier continues. It will probably be found that the French forces have been exaggerated; for nothing but a total want of power to act can account for their not acting.

Chauvelin is continuing to pester Lord Grenville with impertinent, ill-judged, and irregular notes. His object probably is to do mischief; but he does not know how to set about it. I understand that an attempt has been made to print a *Welsh translation* of the "Rights of Man," for the edification of our mountaineers. This reminds me of what happened lately in the port of Lisbon, when the officers of the Douane discovered, in a

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French vessel, two *hogsheads* full of the "Rights of Man" in the Portuguese language!

My very latest letters from England give very pleasant accounts of the right temper and tranquillity of the two islands. It appears highly probable that the Empress of Russia will adjust the affairs of Poland in whatever way she may best like.

Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD GRENVILLE TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

SIR, *Whitehall, June 19th, 1792.*

Your several dispatches were received in due time, and have been laid before the King.

At the same time that I am to transmit to you his Majesty's gracious permission for you to return to England, pursuant to your request, I have it particularly in command from his Majesty, to express to you his entire approbation of the whole of your conduct in the various important negotiations entrusted to your care, in the course of so many years' residence at the Court of Vienna.

I cannot but lament that the state of your health should be such as to occasion your retiring from a line in which you have so ably distinguished yourself; and I shall greatly regret the loss of a minister of your long tried abilities and experience.

You will be at liberty to set out from Vienna as soon as you find it convenient; leaving the official papers in the hands of Mr. Stratton, as his Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, till the arrival of the minister whom his Majesty may be pleased to name to succeed you.

I am, with great truth and regard, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

GRENVILLE.

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LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, June 21st, 1792, 4 o'clock.

My Dear Sir Robert,

Your messenger arrives just at the moment of sitting down to dinner with the Dutch minister, and a great assemblage of our countrymen—the Duke of Buccleugh, Mr. Dundas, junior, Lord Granville Leveson, Lord Borringdon, &c.; and from dinner we go to a crowded circle, on the return of the Princess of Orange; after which I shall be confined to a royal card-table for the rest of the evening. I think it better, therefore, to send away your man, and to write a shabby letter, than to detain him for the sake of a more voluminous performance.

You receive by your servant the permission which you desire, to return to England; and I presume that you will avail yourself of it without delay. I am sorry, however, that it is for the purpose of retiring from the diplomatic line; your loss will, without any compliment, be severely felt. If the troubles of France induce you to come by this road, and to pass three or four days with me at the Hague, I shall at least derive one benefit from those troubles, and shall be sincerely glad to have the occasion of renewing old habits of friendship, and of talking over the *three hundred years* of eventful history which have intervened since we last met. And here too, there are many to whom you are known personally; and still more to whom you are known by fame, and by the respect which is due to you.

Your dispatches of the 13th arrived here by estafette, this morning at ten, and at eleven they were on the Helvoet road. I consider their contents as of the highest importance to England, and as the

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consummation of our good fortune, glories, and prosperity.*

It would lead me too far if I were to attempt to look into the wide field of continental politics at this moment. All the accounts from France say that the troubles in the interior and at Paris, are at their crisis; and at the frontiers the generals dare not trust their troops. And yet, it is not impossible that when the combined Courts come to a settlement, they will be almost as much embarrassed as the National Assembly is at present. It would be a whimsical result, but it is possible that all parties may, at last, call on England to adjust the business. In the mean time, and without forwarding, or even wishing for such a result, our game is that of perfect neutrality, and separation from the whole struggle, and all its concomitants.

Do not believe those who tell you that there is any unusual proportion of faction at present in England. I have tolerably good intelligence on that subject, and am convinced that the strict peace and tranquillity of the two islands never were more secure. I fear that I write neither legibly or intelligibly, but you are an excellent decypherer. I will continue to address occasional letters to you, and Mr. Stratton will open them without scruple.

Believe me, my dear Sir Robert,

Ever faithfully yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, July 10th.

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

I have received yours of the 27th of June, and forwarded its inclosure. In the mean time the

* The first intelligence, forwarded by Sir R. M. Keith, of the termination of the war in India.

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arrival of your servant at Vienna will have put it in your power to move homewards; and as you seem to have a strong appetite for a few mouthfuls of native air, I almost doubt whether you will receive those few lines before you set out.

Mr. Stratton's servant was detained four days at Helvoet, and in the channel, by that cruel gale from the west, which prevailed during the first week of this month. His dispatches, however, though their contents were in part anticipated, contained some authentic documents, not before received, and furnished matter for an extraordinary Gazette. It will not escape your remark, that though this pacification was so desirable an event, and though its conditions are great and glorious, our stocks have not risen. I am unable to explain this circumstance, so contrary to all reasonable speculation. It was easy to suppose that the treaty might be disagreeable to our troops, who, in the career of their glories, would not have disliked the plunder of Seringapatam, and also to a few hot-headed individuals in England, who love nothing that bears any semblance of moderation; but to the general mass of the country, and the proprietors of the Company, it ought certainly to give a permanent and solid satisfaction. We are now opening our eyes and ears for daily news from the French frontier. It is conjectured that Luchner and La Fayette have deviated from any intention of pursuing the attack on the Austrian Netherlands, and that the whole force will soon be diverted to the Rhine. The internal distractions of France seem to be tending to some new and terrible crisis. In the mean time above two months have expired since the wanton declaration of war, without producing anything to the aggressors but small losses and great disgraces.

The alliance between the Courts of Petersburgh and Berlin will be a new incident in the politics of the times.

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It is a curious thing that in the year 1790, the accession of Ocksakow should have been considered at Berlin as so dangerous an advance of the Russian power, that it would be expedient to make war to prevent it—and that in 1792 the acquisition by Russia of absolute influence over all Poland, should be regarded by Prussia not only with indifference, but complacency. Political circumstances vary so rapidly in the present age, that all speculations are idle.

Monsieur de Chauvelin, amidst the strange notes which he thought proper to give to Lord Grenville, presented one to desire the King to use his influence with the States General, to prevent their taking any part in the war. Lord Grenville has answered in a few lines, that the same principle which prevents his Majesty from interfering in the internal affairs of France, prevents him from mixing or intruding himself in the councils of an independent state.

This place is become the sole thoroughfare betwixt England and the Continent, for our countrymen; and no innkeeper on the Bath road greets so many new faces as I do. Believe me ever my dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, August 11th, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

In the daily expectation of the repassing of your servant (who I now learn went by Ostend) I have postponed writing longer than I could have wished. I should not, however, have had much to say if I had written. It is an epoch of events, and of farther preparation for events; but both the causes and consequences are so notorious that the Gazette contains everything.

You will have heard, long before you receive this, that

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the Austrian and Russian treaty was signed at Petersburgh on the 14th of July, and that the Petersburgh and Berlin treaty were expected to be signed in the course of the same month. As I have long been at a loss to comprehend either the principles or policy of the powers bordering on Poland, I see many of these incidents with nearly the same impression that I should feel in perusing a book in an unknown language. In general reasoning, these multiplied alliances (especially when there is a radical incompatibility of interests) lead to nothing but the virtual annihilation of all treaties, and the reference of the whole system to contingencies and circumstances. I do not believe that the armies under Luchner and La Fayette, amount effectively to thirty thousand men. But the National Assembly has supplied the deficiency by assuming functions of Omnipotence; and by declaring, with an equal portion of modesty, morality, and religion, "*Que les peuples courageux et sagement gouvernés* (*c'est-a-dire par les Jacobins*) *sont la Providence du monde!*" It is a strange age! and there are so many *royal and political manufacturers de l'étoffe dont on fait les revolutions*, that we seem likely to pass the remainder of our days in a bustling world. Ever most sincerely yours,

AUCKLAND.

LORD AUCKLAND TO SIR R. M. KEITH.

Hague, August 13*th*, 1792, 8 *p.m.*

MY DEAR SIR ROBERT,

Hislop, after being three days on the sea, arrived here this evening. As I am desired to make him find Lord Henry Spencer on his way, I send him by Dresden; the detour is not great. I take the occasion to recommend Lord Henry to your friendship and protection. The more you know him the more you will

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like him; and he is so discreet, that you may talk with him in the fullest confidence without scruple.

Hislop carries your credentials to the new monarch, that you may take leave in due form. I am sincerely sorry, for the sake and for the credit of the foreign service, that you are ceasing to fill your part in it. But I do not wonder that you wish to live a proportion of your life in the enjoyment of respectable tranquillity among your countrymen and friends. You will have seen, I believe, four sovereigns during your ministry at Vienna. More than twenty years are now elapsed since we first met, as men of business in Cleveland Row; and the period has been so eventful, that we may seem, to our feelings and recollections, to have lived more than fourscore years. You will leave the Continent in a wonderful confusion. With respect to the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, it is a dispute among the learned, which of them has duped the other; but it seems to be generally agreed that they were both duped by the Empress; and I agree with you as to the probability of their being both at war with her before many years elapse. As to Poland, its monarch has made but a poor figure in that business. I chiefly regret the fifteen or twenty thousand lives which have been sacrificed to no end.

As to the French story, it is now like the fifth act of a most interesting tragedy; *and I wait the dénouement without attempting to conjecture it.* I can easily imagine that the combined armies will advance into the country with more or less resistance; but what is to be the result? What the new settlement? By whom shall it be made—and how maintained? All this, "caliginosâ nocte premit Deus." *

* The political sagacity and acumen of these letters would alone have justified their insertion. Their applicability to the present crisis, during which they might have been written, lends them a double interest.

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I should mention to you, on the subject of Lord Grenville's dispatch, by the messenger, that the draft of his Majesty's answer was, previously to its being decided, communicated to the States General, with that full confidence which subsists among us, and approved of by them; and that their answer, which is to the same purpose, and in some measure in the same expressions (only with a shade of more respect and deference), is settled, and now circulating through the provinces. I suppose it will be forwarded to Monsieur de Haeften in a few days.

Adieu, my dear Sir Robert; I cannot write more at present. It was my wish to have sent you a long scrawl; but I am just recovered from a feverishness of four or five days, and am afraid of writing much. My compliments to Mr. Stratton.

Ever yours most sincerely,

AUCKLAND.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Sept. 10th, 1792.

MY LORD,

The last functions of my mission at this Court were fulfilled yesterday morning by the presentation of His Majesty's letters of recall, in my audience of leave of both their Imperial Majesties. I therefore send back the messenger Hislop, with every species of information I have been able to collect at this period, when doubt and instability in the councils of this monarchy, together with a dismal succession of unprecedented events in that of France, render it extremely difficult to carry the eye forward, even to a very moderate distance, in determining the direction of Austrian politics.

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Of one interesting circumstance I can speak with some degree of certainty, and it is this :—

The character and principles of the Emperor Francis, whatever may hereafter prove the extent of their energy or steadiness, are undoubtedly very different, and in some points almost in direct opposition to those of the Emperor Leopold.

Either unable to penetrate so deeply into the mysteries of *State-craft*, or wise enough to despise them, his son soon made known his eager wish to pursue, if possible, a plain and even path in politics; little anxious about his being deemed less shrewd than his father, provided he could earn a reputation of sincerity. I am not presumptuous enough to foretel what rank the Emperor Francis may have a right to hold ten years hence in the catalogue of wise or able monarchs—and, perhaps, that may in a great measure depend on the virtues and talents of his ministers* — but at this hour he has not only the manners and expression of ingenuous youth and an untainted mind, but every person, whether well or ill-disposed to his government, agrees in praising his love of truth and moral rectitude.

The very great embarrassment into which his father's inconsistent politics and rash engagements round the whole compass, threw the young monarch at the very moment of his accession, which became also that of the most important decision, can hardly be conceived.

This dilemma, though not of his own creating, taught him to look around him very carefully on every side, and endeavour to discriminate with his utmost ability what powers were best able to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, and which of them ought to be regarded as the natural friends and allies of his House.

* True of many sovereigns, but especially so of Francis, and Prince Metternich.

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It required but a very small share of sagacity to discover, that whoever had by blunder or false prejudice prevented Austria from having Great Britain for an ally in the actual crisis, was highly blameable. The increasing difficulties of the war against France have served, progressively, to strengthen this principle; and although the good effect of it may be far distant, and that events of various kinds may protract, nay, hasten or ultimately annul its efficacy, I am not afraid of misleading your lordship, when I lay it down as a well-founded opinion, that a future alliance between his Crown and that of Great Britain is a *state maxim*, which took an early, and, I hope, deep root in the Emperor's mind.

I now proceed to fulfil the promise I made to your lordship in my letter of last Wednesday, by specifying the exact expressions which his Imperial Majesty employed, in speaking of his sentiments towards our royal master.

In my audience, on the 2nd instant, I accompanied the delivery of the letter in the King's handwriting, with those expressions of his Majesty's sincere esteem and regard, which your lordship had given me in charge. The Emperor heard me to an end, and then replied as follows:—

"From the language you held to Prince Colloredo, and Count Cobentzel, when you announced this letter, I was happy to learn that the King of England was well satisfied with the first steps of my reign, towards himself and the British nation. I hope, by my future conduct, not only to maintain, but to strengthen that good opinion on which I set a high value. I easily conceive that situated as I am, at present, and as Great Britain is, there may exist, on the side of your sovereign, very cogent reasons for postponing the formation of that more intimate connection, between his Britannic Majesty and me, which I proposed, and sincerely wished

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to accomplish. The unhappy turn of the affairs of France drew me, unavoidably, into the war I am now pursuing. The calamities which are daily accumulating on the French royal family, and the danger of contagion from the horrid principles which predominate to the most violent pitch in that miserable country, render it more and more necessary, that I should, in conjunction with my allies, exert the utmost efforts to bring the war to a speedy and decisive termination. I trust that we shall be able to effectuate that great end in a short time; and then I shall be well pleased to find the King of England disposed to evince that esteem which he so kindly professes, by connecting the interests of the two nations, in a close and permanent manner."

In my audience of leave yesterday, his Imperial Majesty again made use of expressions of the same purport, though in broken sentences, and with less formality. But he concluded that subject by a phrase which contained a frank avowal of an error, into which his predecessor had fallen, and which he is desirous to correct.

On my saying that it had grieved me to learn what had passed during my absence at Sistovo, and that some one of his father's subjects had found means to destroy the fairest prospect of seeing the two Crowns in alliance—his Imperial Majesty answered with a good deal of emphasis—"I am sorry for it too, and I am persuaded that this country never found itself so well as when it was in alliance with England." The precise words in French were, "J'en suis faché comme vous; et je suis persuadé que ce pays n'a jamais *si bien fait*, que lorsqu'il était en alliance avec vous."

I shall not trouble your lordship with any detail of what the Emperor was pleased to say to me on my departure; but it did me great honour, and furnished

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one more proof of the high esteem in which the principles of a British subject are held at Vienna.

Here then it behoves me to lay down the political pen; but I shall ever retain a just sense of the obligations I owe to my superiors. My efforts, during the course of five-and-twenty years in this line, have been unquestionably assiduous. It rests with others to determine the degree of merit to which they can, in justice, lay claim. I have the honour to be, with great respect and regard, &c.

R. M. K.

Anxious as Sir R. M. Keith had long been to relinquish a situation combining the necessity for an incessant petty vigilance over the proceedings of others, utterly foreign to his nature,* with a political inactivity, the more irksome from its contrast with his late scene of important though troublesome negotiation, *he* was too faithful a servant of the Crown to desert his post at the commencement of a new reign, till he had laid before his principal a summary, equally useful and masterly, of the state resources, political, financial, and military, of the empire, and of the supposed disposition

* Perhaps a more irrefragable proof of the truth of the above assertion can hardly be found than in a short official letter of this precise period.

SIR R. M. KEITH TO LORD GRENVILLE.

Vienna, Feb. 15th, 1792.

My Lord,

I had the honour to receive along with your lordship's dispatch, on Monday last, his Majesty's additional instructions on the subject of *Foreign Secret Service Money;* and shall not fail to pay the strictest obedience to them on any occasion that might hereafter occur.

In the meantime, I have the satisfaction to assure your lordship, that in the five-and-twenty years, during which I have had the honour of serving his Majesty, in various foreign missions, I never charged a *single shilling* for Secret Service Money to the account of Government.

I have the honour to be,

R. M. Keith.

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and principles of the new monarch. Having discharged this duty to his sovereign and country, with all the energy and minuteness of his first dispatch, twenty years before, and all the results of that twenty years' experience—he felt at length at liberty to consult his own health and enjoyment; and redeem from official toil the remainder of a life, alas! too soon to terminate.

Those who have accompanied (and it is hoped not without feelings of respect for the minister, and partiality towards the man) the subject of these pages to the close of his diplomatic career, and the threshold of that *home* towards which, during its whole period, he had so often and fondly looked—will be pleased to learn that Britain fulfilled for him during a few privileged years, if not the sanguine visions of domestic re-union in Scotland, of which the death and dispersion of most of his nearest and dearest forbade the realisation, the more sober anticipations of friendly enjoyment in the society of many of the attached comrades and constant correspondents of his maturer life. His successive town residences (in Privy Gardens and Grafton Street) became the favourite resort of all such members of the "Gang," so often mentioned, or of his numerous "Vienna lads," as resided in, or visited London; where the select, yet *récherché* dinners of the quondam ambassador, were long remembered for the zest imparted to their chosen circle by the host's unaffected welcome and unrivalled powers of conversation.

His love of green fields and walking (which never deserted him even during twelve long years passed at one time within the walls of Vienna) found exercise in summer excursions to the country seats, whose names the previous correspondence has rendered familiar; where hosts of Campbells, and Drummonds, and Yorkes, and Sebrights, vied with each other in welcoming him to share their social enjoyments.

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There cannot, perhaps, be a more striking proof of his preference for these, over all the unsatisfactory pomps, and hollow courtesies, to which he had been so long a victim, than that in the last note extant from his pen, (written only a few days before his sudden dissolution), accepting one of those friendly invitations, a stipulation occurs, "provided you have no great men or ministers with you, for in truth I am sick of them!" Unsophisticated in character by a sojourn in Courts, unchilled in heart by sixty-five years' intercourse with the world, unbroken in spirits by the long yoke of political servitude, it was almost in the exercise of cheerful hospitality that the life of this great and good man found a characteristic conclusion. A few intimate friends (among others Baron Jacobi, the Prussian minister in London, with whom he had formed a peculiar friendship while filling a situation at Vienna) had dined with Sir R. M. Keith, at a villa he then occupied near Hammersmith; after seeing them to their carriages, he was struck down on his threshold, with an instantaneous and fatal effusion of water on the chest; and died lamented, as he had lived beloved, on the 7th of July, 1795.

The half century which has since elapsed, and the consignment to the grave, within that period, of all who could have given information, precludes the melancholy satisfaction of ascertaining, in which of London's crowded and desecrated cemeteries repose the ashes of the subject of the foregoing sketch; or whether (as can scarcely be doubted) a tablet there once bore the now perhaps obliterated record of his worth. Monumental inscriptions, however, all are aware, are too uniformly laudatory, and bear too strongly the impress of recent grief and family predilections, to carry much weight with impartial posterity.

It may, perhaps, therefore, prove a more valuable

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tribute to the unquestionable excellencies of Sir Robert Murray Keith, to quote, in characterising them, the testimony of living friendship in the person of an illustrious foreigner, whose own high moral worth and literary attainments rendered him every way qualified to judge of similar endowments in others; and whose estimate, after long and intimate intercourse, of the character of one, his admiration for whom (says more than one traveller) certainly amounted to *enthusiasm*, is expressed in terms to whose elegant significance in the original, a translation can do but faint justice.

The value, however, of such a testimony must ever depend on the moral worth and mental superiority of him by whom it is borne. The writer was Monsieur de Dalberg, coadjutor, and successor in the event of his demise, to the Elector of Mayence; a prelate spoken of in the highest terms by all who had the honour of his acquaintance; a privilege procured by Sir R. M. Keith for such of his young English friends as visited Erfurth or Ratisbon, at both which places and intervening country seats, he extended towards them a hospitality at once princely and paternal.*

Exercising important functions in the state, in familiar and unreserved communication with the Emperor, and enjoying, like the friend he commemorates, with peculiar zest the innocent pleasures of society, he yet found leisure for the diligent cultivation of the mind; rising at four in the morning to pursue the severer studies of

* "I shall always rejoice" (writes Lord Ancram) "at having come to Erfurth, since it has procured me the acquaintance, and I hope friendship of Mons. Dalberg; the most amiable and respectable of men."—"We have just heard (writes another Englishman to his family, from Vienna), "that Mons. de Dalberg is chosen Coadjutor to the Elector; which secures him the Electorate at his death. This has given the highest pleasure to *every one here*. Even the *Nuncio* could not help testifying his joy; although he knows Mons. Dalberg is no friend to the Court of Rome."

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algebra and mathematics, in which he carried off two principal prizes given by the Academy of Munich.

Such was the man who (judging, no doubt, of another congenial spirit by the model in which Nature had moulded his own) wrote to Sir R. M. K. "In reading the character of Montrose as drawn by Hume, I congratulated myself on knowing the man who resembles him; whose great and noble soul does honour to humanity; whose society enlightens my understanding, and inspires in my heart a passionate love of virtue. If ever in danger of faltering in the path of duty, I will say to myself, 'Remember that Keith honours thee with his friendship.'"

In justice to this elegant scholar (of whom one competent judge writes, "Jamais je n'ai vu d'homme avec des connaissances plus étendues"), the beautiful original effusion of friendship must be given in its own words:— "En lisant le portrait de Montrose par Hume, je me suis félicité de connoître l'homme qui lui ressemble; dont l'âme, vraiment grande et belle honore l'humanité; dont la société éclaire mon esprit, et *passionne mon cœur pour la vertu*, et si je bronche dans le chemin du devoir, je *me dirai*, '*Songez que* Keith t'honore de son amitié!'"

One other letter, more interesting to humanity than meagre records of funeral obsequies, will serve to show the friendship "strong in death" of the "Philip Yorke," whose honourable career it had been for twenty years its subject's pride and pleasure to follow with approbation; and whose last act of filial piety to his deceased Mentor, may not inappropriately usher in a similar (and final) tribute to the memory of the gifted sister to whom the following was addressed.

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THE EARL OF HARDWICKE TO MRS. ANNE MURRAY KEITH.

New Cavendish Street, November 11th, 1795.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint you that I have this day been performing the melancholy office of presenting to the King the insignia of the Order of your much lamented brother, and my excellent friend and protector.* His Majesty was pleased to say, as I expected, many very handsome things of Sir Robert; and seemed to speak of him with real regret, as an old and faithful servant of the Crown. His Majesty expressed himself with much kindness, and I am sure with equal truth, in respect of his talents and character. He agreed most perfectly in what I ventured to add, as my opinion, that he was one of the few persons in this island, who possessed a complete and general knowledge of foreign countries, and to whom, for instance, so inconsiderable a person as myself, could resort for information upon all subjects of that description.

In my answer to his Majesty's inquiries (which are always minute upon occasions where he takes an interest, as well as his memory and information accurate) I told him that the care of a little girl, of about eight years of age,† had devolved upon you. "Well!" said the King, "it will be fortunate for the child. She is a very sensible woman." This compliment to you,

* The peculiar circumstances, under which, it will be recollected, these insignia had been originally conferred, must have awakened in the royal mind, long dormant, and touching recollections.

† The Editor of the present work; whose filial gratitude to the admirable "guide of her youth," will find more eloquent expression in the following exquisite letter. If the "condolence of a King" have power to soothe sorrow, how much more the appreciation of a *Scott!*

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and some inquiries respecting Lady Hardwicke's relationship to your family, concluded the conversation.

Though melancholy ideas are excited by such details, yet I thought it would not be disagreeable to you to receive them, while fresh in my recollection. There is a melancholy pleasure in reflecting that the object of one's particular sorrow, is as generally as justly regretted; and though there is, in truth, no more real weight in the condolences of a King, than in those of another person, the habits of the world make one attach a value to them, which it is impossible not to feel; and in this particular instance, I consider it not only as the civil speech of a sovereign, but of a very worthy man, who had opportunities of knowing the valuable parts of the character which was the object of it. In speaking of the knowledge of foreign countries, his Majesty said many civil things of my uncle, Lord Dover; and in that respect, he joined him with your brother in the same class.

Believe me ever, dear Madam, very sincerely,

Your obliged and affectionate servant,

HARDWICKE.

SIR WALTER SCOTT TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. LINDSAY.

Edinburgh, June 13th, 1818.

DEAR MRS. LINDSAY,

I have the honour to acknowledge, with sincere and grateful thanks, your kind letter accompanying a curious and valuable antique ring, as a memorial of our late excellent friend, Mrs. Murray Keith. Nothing could have been more acceptable to me than such a token of remembrance, for I held very dear the place which she allowed me in her esteem; and it was not the less valuable to me that I owed it as much to her kind partiality in favour of a friend, as to her judgment,

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which was too correct to have ranked me so highly as an author.

We, who have, so much longer than the ordinary period of human life, enjoyed the society of this excellent woman, and who *can never know any one who can be to us what she was,* and cannot but reflect upon her virtues, her talents, her exquisite elasticity, and at the same time, kindness of disposition, must always hold everything sacred that is connected with her memory; as one who lived among us with the recollections of a former generation, yet, with all the warmth of heart, and clearness of intellect, which enabled her to enter into the events, and interests of our own. I never knew any one whose sunset was so enviably serene; and such was the benevolence of her disposition, that one almost thought Time respected a being so amiable; and laid his hand upon her so gradually, that she reached the extremity of age, and the bowl was broken at the cistern before she experienced either the decay of her organs, or of her excellent intellect. The recollection of her virtues and her talents is now all that remains to us; but it will be a valued treasure to all who shared her esteem.

Amid the fortunate circumstances of our friend's life, it was not the least that she had around her in the evening of her days, relatives on whom the kindly affections in which she indulged could be so worthily bestowed; and in bequeathing her mortal remains to the chapel at Balcarres, she laid them to rest amongst those who were deservedly most dear to her, and by whom the bequest will, I am sure, long be regarded with affectionate veneration.

Once more, dear Mrs. Lindsay, accept my grateful thanks for a favour, of which I am most sincerely sensible. I intend to have the ring adjusted to my finger, and to put the name of the former proprietor upon the

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circle; that those who may succeed to it hereafter, may value it accordingly. Mrs. Scott joins me in requesting to be respectfully remembered to Mr. Lindsay on his return, and to all the family at Balcarres.

Believe me, with much respect, dear Madam,
Your much obliged, and most faithful humble servant,
WALTER SCOTT.

THE END.

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